A THEORETICAL STUDY OF TWO ETHNIC PERFORMANCES - TIṞAYĀṬṬAṀ AND SARPPAṀTUḶḶAL: INTERPRETATIONS USING DHVANI THEORY

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Synopsis

Artistic expressions and aesthetic responses are ubiquitous in human worlds. They are flexible and versatile, ranging from cave paintings to street art, oral narratives to poetic expressions, and mimes to theatre performances. Of these, some expressions are rooted in local identities and cultures, while others are free from the clutches of locale. However, a general theoretical framework unifying different kinds of aesthetic expressions remains underdeveloped. Representatively, ethnic art forms of Kerala, such as Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal, though popular among the masses, are yet to be brought within a satisfactory theoretical framework. Descriptive and exploratory studies on ethnic performances have focused mainly on socio-political aspects of artistic performances. In preference, Ānadhavardana's theory of suggestion (*dhvani*) provides a theoretical framework for analysing literary expressions. Could this theory be used to develop a theoretical framework for expressions in general?

The thesis suggests the possibility of an extended *dhvani* theory that charts aesthetic expressions in general, in an explanatory way. It proposes a theoretical framework for symbolic expressions and challenges the claim that the scope of *dhvani* theory is limited to literary expressions. First, the thesis examines literary expressions and proposes additional flexibility in aesthetic expressions with suggestions when compared to literal and metaphorical expressions. Nevertheless, this suggestive potential to generate more than one meaning applies to any form of symbolic expression. To substantiate this argument about the wide applicability of *dhvani* theory, the thesis relies on the classification of *dhvani* given by Ānandavardhana and analyses visual expressions and ethnic performances.

Though art is ubiquitous, hinting at an aesthetic capacity unique to humans, its realisation -apprehension and appreciation of aesthetic expressions and sensibilities- is shaped and modulated by cultural and pragmatic elements. Specifically, in aesthetic expressions that share an antagonistic relationship between the literal and implied meanings, semantic conflict can arise between the literal and implied meanings or directly at the literal level. The semantic conflict's resolution lies either through applying linguistic or pragmatic strategies. As the aesthetic

expressions with suggestions get *unleashed* from the literal and metaphorical meanings, they become fluid, flexible, and fuzzy. The ability to create and appreciate aesthetic expressions with suggestions is a uniquely human capacity, though there are different levels of aesthetic appreciation. To illustrate, in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* (phonic-based suggestion), there is a lexical drift from the contextual meaning to the non-contextual meaning or vice versa. If the target expressions cannot capture the contour of the homonym with its multiple meanings, then those subtle nuances of meaning and the impression it has created in the original expression are lost in translation due to linguistic clogging. Even so, satisfying both the semantic and aesthetic constraints by recovering the literal and suggested meanings where possible can improve the quality of translation. However, adapting ethnic performances with another form is even more challenging, as the cognitive and cultural elements are intertwined in aesthetic appreciation. Even now, age-old mythological stories are reintroduced into artistic compositions without losing their aesthetic appeal using suggestive expressions. Hence, artistic composition benefits from including aesthetic expression with suggestions, adding novelty to a work of art. The proposed general theoretical framework of expressions thus includes an account of cognitive and cultural elements that accommodate aesthetic expressions with suggestions, apart from literal and metaphorical expressions.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Artistic behaviours and aesthetic responses are ubiquitous in human worlds. Aesthetic expressions ranging from cave paintings to street art display the aesthetic sensibilities of human beings in varying degrees and forms. On this footing, aesthetic expressions such as cave art, mural paintings, oral songs, and folk performances mark the chronicle of human civilisation. At the same time, these aesthetic expressions and their cultural realisation hint at the possible underlying aesthetic capacity. The universal nature of human aesthetic expressions and the near absence of similar free expressions in non-human species suggest that the capacity for creating art and enjoying it could be species-specific. In this sense, human beings are "biologically isolated"[1] from the rest of the animal world with limited, if any, aesthetic sensibilities. Contrary to the limited aesthetic capacities in the non-human species, the potential to elicit aesthetic responses even after repeated encounters with aesthetic expressions makes human beings an "art species"[2].

Artists use aesthetic expressions to portray incidents or events in various ways, ranging from realistic to exaggerated or concrete to abstract representations. Regardless of the approach taken, aesthetic expressions can evoke a wide range of emotional responses in readers or *sahṛdayas*. However, aesthetic expressions are different from ordinary communicative expressions. The primary intention of communicative expressions is to convey information or persuade the listener to react in a particular way. They rely on clear and direct language, on occasion with logical and rational arguments, to communicate their message. People often assess communicative expressions for accuracy, credibility, and effectiveness. In contrast, aesthetic expressions, such as poetry, painting, and music, are primarily intended to create an emotional response. Connoisseurs often judge aesthetic expressions for their aesthetic qualities, such as creativity, novelty, and emotional impact.

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[1] Chomsky & Smith (2000). *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind*
[2] Davies (2012) *The Artful Species: Aesthetics, Art, and Evolution.*

In *Languages of Art*, Nelson Goodman points out the explanatory limitations in the investigations of the varieties of aesthetic expressions. He laments the lack of any systematic theoretical account to resolve the aesthetic enigma. He foregrounds the need for an "intensive examination of non-verbal sign systems" to account for this aesthetic enigma. Later, cognitive scientists, evolutionary biologists, and cultural anthropologists provided various approaches from naturalistic and evolutionary accounts of the aesthetic capacity (Davies, 2012; Rolls, 2017; Kozbelt, 2017). However, those approaches are limited in their domains as they focus either on cognitive or cultural aspects behind aesthetic appreciation in isolation. As an alternative approach, the thesis analyses one of the aesthetic theories proposed by Ānandavardhana and attempts to apply the canons of *dhvani* theory to the study of aesthetic expressions.

Aesthetic expressions with suggested meanings differ from communicative expressions with literal and metaphorical meanings. Aesthetic expressions carry unique, distinguishable characteristics, such as novelty, variability and concealability. The linguistic expressions with literal and metaphorical meanings are insufficient to address the aesthetic puzzle, which is one step higher than the rest. More flexibility is added to human aesthetic expressions compared to linguistic expressions with literal and metaphorical meanings. Hence, expressions with the suggestive potential need to be considered to account for the characterising features of human aesthetic expressions. *Dhvani* theory (theory of suggestion) posits the possibility of distinguishing between the literal and suggested meanings of expressions. By employing and developing the theoretical tools of classical Indian aesthetics, this thesis proposes that there are cognitive and cultural elements in the production and realisation of aesthetic experience, making a non-human world a different kind despite having "aesthetic" phenomena. The thesis builds on the Indian aesthetic theories of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta in explaining the cognitive and cultural elements of aesthetic experience.

The Theory of Suggestion (*Dhvani* theory)

Around the 9th century CE, Ānandavardhana articulated the philosophy of aesthetic suggestion and systematically theorised the concept of *dhvani* (aesthetic suggestion) in his magnum opus

Dhvanyāloka (*Light on the doctrine of suggestion*)[3]. At the beginning of the text, he asserts that this theory had already been implemented, as great artists used it even before his time[4]. However, there were differences in opinion on the concept, nature, significance, impact, and relevance of *dhvani*. Ānandavardhana systematically theorised the concept of *dhvani* (aesthetic suggestion), codified them into different varieties and gave clear, concise, and precise definitions for each of its varieties. He gave a proper framework that defines the concept of *dhvani* through various *Karikas*[5] and *Vrittis*. He explained how each component of a linguistic expression, like word and meaning, can give rise to aesthetic suggestion. According to Ānandavardhana, "words and expressions can be termed *dhvani* only if in its being suggestive in enhancing the aesthetic beauty of the expression which could be achieved by no other, non-suggestive manner of expression"[6] (1990, p. 183). Even so, secondary literature maintains that *dhvani* theory is confined to literary expressions. Thus, the popular view regarding *dhvani* theory is that *dhvani* cannot be generalised. Ānandavardhana has explained how *dhvani* becomes an essential factor in the aesthetic process and how efficiently poets have used them. The theoretical framework of the texts facilitates multi-dimensional reading. While considering these textual sources as the objective truth on art forms, critics often forget that the text can always have different interpretations. If we take textual sources as ideas rather than fixed rules, we could find their resonance even in contemporary times.

This study primarily focuses on examining the role of *dhvani* in the process of art appreciation and suggests a novel approach to understanding and appreciating various art forms. It attempts to show how *dhvani* theory can be generalised by considering different art forms. To explore this theoretical line, specific cases of ethnic art forms of Kerala named Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal are taken. In doing so, it will widen the scope of the theory as it does not restrict to any particular

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[3] *Dhvani* theory is a fully-fledged aesthetic theory with a deep philosophical understanding developed from Kashmir Shaivism.

[4] "*tasya hi dhvaneḥ svarūpaṃ sakala-sat-kavi-kāvyopaniṣad-bhūtam atiramaṇīyam aṇīyasībhir api cirantana-kāvya-lakṣaṇa-vidhāyināṃ buddhibhir anunmīlita-pūrvam*" (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 6).

[5] *saṃkṣiptasūtrabahvarthasūcakaḥ ślokaḥ kārikā*

[6] "*ukty-antareṇāśakyaṃ yat tac cārutvaṃ prakāśayan / śabdo vyañjakatāṃ bibhrad dhvany-ukter viṣayībhavet //"* (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 32).

"*yatrārthaḥ śabdo vā tam artham upasarjanīkṛta-svārthau / vyaṅktaḥ kāvya-viśeṣaḥ sa dhvanir iti sūribhiḥ kathitaḥ*" (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 18).

"That kind of poetry, wherein the (conventional) meaning renders itself secondary or the (conventional) word renders its meaning secondary and suggests the (intended or) implied meaning, is designated by the learned as *dhvani* or 'Suggestive Poetry' (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 19)".

form of art; instead, it will consider the theory from a larger perspective incorporating ethnic performances which were side-lined from art criticism. It is hoped that the comparison and analysis of various art forms will enhance our understanding of *dhvani* theory and thereby make the process of art appreciation an easy sail.

Embracing Ethnic Performances: Enriching the Artistic Landscape

A significant part of India's cultural heritage is built by its extraordinarily dynamic and diverse array of folk and ethnic traditions. However, ethnic performances have not received a comparable kind of attention from scholarly minds as other forms of aesthetic expressions. It is essential to give adequate recognition and importance to ethnic performances as they preserve cultural heritage, foster cultural diversity, and enrich the artistic landscape. These art forms showcase the creativity and artistic ingenuity of ethnic communities and contribute to the broader medley of performing arts and to the wider world of arts. Kerala adorns this cultural tapestry with Teyyaṁ, Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ, Sarppaṁtuḷḷal, and Paṭayaṇi, which are a few of the ethnic art forms of the locale, among others. Ethnic performances captivate the world of performing arts by embracing the kaleidoscope of artistic diversity. On one side, they showcase cultural expressions deeply rooted in the traditions of ethnic communities, harmoniously performed by all community members. In contrast, certain ethnic art forms are highly refined and specialised, with well-established techniques, formal training, and strict adherence to specific rules and conventions. These art forms come alive through the dedication and expertise of skilled practitioners who have undergone years of training and practice in the art form.

Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ

Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ is a ritual performing art form that demands the utmost dedication, skill, and expertise from its practitioners. This captivating art form, deeply rooted in ethnic traditions, embodies the cultural heritage and artistic expression of ethnic communities. Generally, people belonging to communities such as Perumannan, Panan, Velan, and Cheruman perform Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ. The performance is attended by a handful of people to hundreds of people from various communities, depending upon the time of the performance and the significance of the worshipped deity. It is performed between the Malayalam calendar months of *thulām* and *medam*, corresponding to the period from November to April. It is widely prevalent in

Kozhikode and Malappuram districts of Kerala. Devotees perform, Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ every year to please the gods and goddesses worshipped in sacred groves. Bhagavatī, Karivilli, Karumakan, and Kariyāttan are some of the many deities worshipped in such sacred groves. The verbal component of the performance carries the narrative, often drawing inspiration from local myths, legends, or historical events. It serves as a means for passing down cultural knowledge and expressing the emotions, beliefs, and values of the ethnic communities.

Sarppaṁtuḷḷal

Sarppaṁtuḷḷal, also known as, Pāmpum tuḷḷal, Pāmpin kaḷaṁ, Nāgam pāṭṭu, Sarppōtsavam, or Nāgapātu Sarpolsavam, is another ethnic art form of Kerala. Snakes are worshipped as Nāgarājā and Nāgayakṣi. Devotees of Nāgarājā and Nāgayakṣi hold the ritual performance once a year to appease the serpent god. The members of the Puḷḷuva community sing Nāgapātu to invoke the serpent gods. Typically, a group of seven members of the Puḷḷuvan community sing Nāgapātu over a span of seven days. The musical instruments used for the performance are Puḷḷuva Vīna, Puḷḷuva kuṭaṁ and Ilattāḷaṁ. The sacred space where the performance takes place is known as Maṇippaṇtal. Inside this maṇippaṇtal, performers create a colourful pattern known as *kaḷam* using the powder of naturally obtained materials. *Kaḷam ezhuth* is an art form performed in conjunction with Nāgapātu. A small *kaḷam* is sketched during the day, while a more elaborate *kaḷam* is created at night. Puḷḷuvan praises the serpents through the Nāgapātu and invites them to the *kaḷam*. Maidens who have completed fourteen days of fasting sit in the *kaḷam* with flowers of areca nut on their hands. The power of serpents is invoked by singing Nāgapātu and by playing the Puḷḷuva Vīna and Puḷḷuva kuṭaṁ in the background. Absorbed in the ritualistic song, they erase the *kaḷam* by vigorously moving and crawling through the *kaḷam*. Some of the family members are believed to move around the *kaḷam* as they feel the presence of the Nāga deities in their bodies. When they reach a state of frenzy, they move their bodies violently and show the snake's presence by exhibiting its movements.

Ethnic art forms like Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal constantly help to nurture the inextricable link between humans and nature. These ethnic performances also play a significant role in protecting and preserving sacred groves. Even though it is impossible to date the origin of these performances, they have been constant companions for humans in their life journey from time

immemorial. This study is an attempt to understand why these ethnic performances continue to coexist with a large audience and to place it in a general aesthetic framework by reconstructing the aesthetic theories which were developed in India in a comparatively earlier time frame and reinterpreting *dhvani* theory to place them in the contemporary framework by giving a theoretical account.

Fieldwork and method

The present study conducted fieldwork over a period of 10 months, from January 2019 to March 2020. Based on the pilot study conducted, it was understood that restricting the research to a particular Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ would limit the scope and understanding of the performance. However, covering every performance was challenging due to simultaneous temple festivals. Consequently, the study focused on eight major Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ groups identified during the pilot study. The researcher visited eight temple festivals between January and March 2019 and seven temple festivals from February to March 2020. The study on Sarppaṁtuḷḷal specifically centres around the Mullathil Nāgakāv located in the village named Puthukod, which is situated in the Cherukaav Grama Panchayat of the Malappuram district.

The primary objective was to identify the elements that contribute to *dhvani* in Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal performances. The research drew upon the theoretical text *Dhvanyāloka*, which does not prescribe strict rules for artists but emphasises the concept of *dhvani* and the significance of suggested meaning. The study argues that suggested meaning is not limited to textual forms alone but extends to symbolic forms. The study examined the patterns, connections, similarities, and contrasts between suggested meanings in literary texts and other symbolic art forms like Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal to establish a link between theory and practice. The study also drew insights from Ānandavardhana's perspective, which emphasised that *Dhvanyāloka* provides indications rather than strict guidelines. To explore further, literary expressions given in *Dhvanyāloka* were taken for analysis. The examples in the text served as indications and not exclusive cases for manifesting specific emotions. The manifestation of emotions depends on the connoisseur's interpretation and the poet's creativity. By understanding this dynamic, the study aimed to establish a common ground between theory and practice. In summary, the research methodology involved field visits to temple festivals and performances,

analysis of textual sources, exploration of suggested meanings in performances, and a focus on the living link between practice and theory provided by the performers. The study aimed to uncover the elements that contribute to *dhvani* in Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal performances and establish connections between theory and practice in the realm of suggested meanings and artistic creativity.

By conducting this study, I hope to rekindle the awareness and understanding of ethnic communities connected with sacred groves and nature worship while expanding our cultural knowledge. This study aims to draw the public's attention and cultivate a more profound awareness among individuals regarding the growing importance of these performances. The fact that there has been no substantial research on the aesthetics of ethnic performances specifically focused on this region further adds to the significance and value of this study. A vast amount of knowledge has been handed down orally from generation to generation through these ethnic performances and oral songs, Chandera (1967, 2004), Vishnu Namboothiri (1998, 1977, 2016), Choondal Chummar (1978), and K. K. N. Kurup (1977) have done elaborate studies on folk literature and folk performances of Kerala. However, only a few studies have been conducted on Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal, and most of them are informative, factual descriptions minus their aesthetic significance. There are several descriptive studies conducted in these areas. However, the studies, if any, that go deep into investigating the development of the ethnic art forms of Kerala and analysing the aesthetic pleasure which is embedded in these art forms apart from their ritualistic significance are not known.

Chapter Outline

This thesis examines Ānandavardhana's views on the suggestive potential of literary expressions. To further explore the puzzle of aesthetic experience and pleasure, the second chapter begins with an analysis of the different types of linguistic expressions. Based on this, I elucidate some of Ānandavardhana's views on aesthetic suggestion. The chapter argues that freely *anchored* aesthetic expressions have an additional level of flexibility compared to *tightly anchored* non-human expressions and *openly anchored* linguistic expressions. The third chapter relies on the classification of *dhvani* given by Ānandavardhana to analyse verbal and visual expressions. The fourth chapter shows how cognitive and cultural elements are intertwined in the process of aesthetic appreciation. It requires cognitive structures and the internal temperaments evolved

from the cultural context for the apprehension and appreciation of aesthetic bliss. The fifth chapter argues that sound and meaning are not merely external conditions for aesthetic engagement but the essential components that aid suggestion. The sixth chapter argues that even after repeated encounters with aesthetic expressions, the suggestive potential of words never gets exhausted in the minds of connoisseurs. Hence, a work of art can still appear novel even if artists incorporate age-old popular myths into them.

Chapter 2: **Symbolic Power of Words**

Literary and artistic expressions are free to move beyond denotation and from what is directly represented. Accordingly, the literal meaning of the expressions may be shifted to an allied meaning or may get totally abandoned, overpowered, or overshadowed by a different meaning. Aesthetic expressions differ from linguistic expressions and have some unique, distinguishable characteristics compared to other linguistic expressions. Based on these distinguishable characteristics, expressions can be categorised into three types: tightly *anchored* non-human expressions, *openly anchored* linguistic expressions, and *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions. Further, this chapter argues that *tightly anchored* non-human expressions are in the form of 'reporting' and metaphorical expression is a form of 'showing'. In contrast, *freely anchored* aesthetic expression with suggestion is a form of 'hiding'.

Chapter 3: Resonance of *Dhvani* in Visual Expressions

Human beings commonly express their thoughts and emotions through verbal or visual expressions. The basic requirement of any symbolic act is to understand it and to make sense of it. An artwork being a symbolic act entails the same, along with its capacity to evoke aesthetic bliss when a worldly object is converted into an art statement. This chapter primarily focuses on visual and verbal expressions and examines the possibility of extending *dhvani* theory to other art forms by analysing certain literary expressions from *Dhvanyāloka*. Based on the different varieties of *dhvani,* some visually stimulating paintings and certain acts from Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ performances are analysed. The chapter is categorised into the following sections based on the different varieties of aesthetic suggestions. The first section includes an analysis of literary expressions from *Dhvanyāloka*, introducing different types of *dhvani*. Interpretations and commentaries from the secondary literature are considered to analyse these literary expressions.

As some free-flowing strokes are also capable of evoking powerful emotions, the second section focuses on some visually stimulating brush strokes to explore the resonance of *dhvani* in visual expressions. The third section looks into the ethnic art form, Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ. It aims to figure out the constitutive elements of aesthetic pleasure inherent in performing arts, focusing on Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal. The final section of this chapter constitutes the empirical core of the chapter, which explains how various art forms are correlated to each other and stresses the need to broaden and deepen our theoretical understanding of *dhvani* by integrating and interweaving different forms of art.

Chapter 4: **Paradox in Performance**

Art is ubiquitous in all cultures. However, its realisation is not universal. The fourth chapter analyses the presumption that there are different levels of appreciation in art. It discusses the reason for the individual variations in art appreciation, even while all human beings share the same general cognitive structure that makes art appreciation possible for the species. Presumably, though suggestion provides creatively nuanced artistic ways of expressing meaning in a literary work, its apprehension and appreciation are realised when circumstances such as cultural context, intellectual preparedness, and social interactions that influence the internal temperament combine to convey it. Otherwise, it will not be apprehended. This chapter proposes that these features are shaped and modulated by cultural elements. This chapter argues that there are cognitive structures and cultural elements behind aesthetic appreciation, which gives it a universal structure. This section will focus on how these two elements are intertwined in the process of aesthetic appreciation.

Chapter 5: The Art of Literary Translation and Artistic Adaptations

Poetic devices like double entendre, paronomasia, and onomatopoeia, though found in the language of everyday life, add a different texture to literary expressions. In literary expressions, figures of speech can be directly expressed or implied by the suggestive potential of words. By outlining two features of language termed ‘lexical drift’ and ‘linguistic clogging’ and employing certain explanatory concepts of classical Indian aesthetics, this chapter addresses the question of how phonic elements of language constrain or smooth the ways of translation. Linguistic clogging, the chapter argues, constrains the translation of expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla*

dhvani (phonic-based suggestion) in two ways. As a semantic constraint, the presence of *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* in source expressions impedes translation if unsatisfied in target expressions. Secondly, as an aesthetic constraint, it curtails the aesthetic pleasure for readers even if the semantic constraint is satisfied by paraphrasing the source expressions. However, with examples illustrating successful attempts to translate literary expressions with *śleṣa* and *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, this chapter shows how paying heed to various linguistic constraints can aid literary translation. The second part of this chapter analyses the role of ethnic performances and related rituals in protecting the environment that sustains them. Traditional methods of community-based conservation through ethnic performances and related rituals are vital in protecting the pristine sanctum of the groves, the last shelter of biodiversity. It is not just a display of emotional scenes, but the integration of all the elements that are part of the society is reflected in these performances. The final section of this chapter discusses the consequences of keeping these ethnic performances away from their "natural" environment.

Chapter 6: Novelty in a Work of Art

The sixth chapter examines how a work of art appears fresh and novel, even after some popular myths are incorporated into the work of art. Certain literary expressions from *Dhvanyāloka* relevant to understanding the concept of novelty in a work of art are analysed. Not just words and expressions, even the literary characters are not bound to any single work of art. Even literary characters get metamorphosed into newer versions of themselves. In some instances, they are represented as a reflection of the same without their own existence. Nevertheless, such characters often get portrayed from different perspectives and recreated as different characters by maintaining a life of their own. In doing so, novelty is achieved in literary works and visual and performing arts. In Indian mythology, a mythical character called Kuṭṭiccāttan is familiar to the people of Kerala through indigenous rituals, yet they capture the character through different narratives. The second part of this chapter analyses the character of Kuṭṭiccāttan and finds out how the character is portrayed and presented through various performative, literary, and ritualistic traditions across Kerala. The final part of this chapter analyses the different ways adopted by Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ performers to bring novelty to a performance.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Expressions can be categorised into three types: tightly anchored non-human expressions, openly anchored linguistic expressions and freely anchored aesthetic expressions. Aesthetic expressions categorised under freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions differ from tightly anchored non-human expressions, openly-anchored linguistic expressions. Openly anchored expressions form a slightly permeable yet restricted association between the word and the meaning. The potential to generate more than one meaning favours the flexibility in freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions. Nevertheless, this suggestive potential to generate more than one meaning is not just limited to words or verbal expressions. It is applicable to any form of expression that is symbolic. Paintings, performances, oral narratives, be it any form of artistic expression, if it is in the form of freely-anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions, then all the features of freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions are applicable to those expressions. Though freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions provide creatively nuanced artistic ways of expressing meaning in a literary work, its apprehension and appreciation get realised when circumstantial elements, such as cultural context, intellectual ability, and social interactions that influence the internal temperament, are favourable in conveying it. Otherwise, it will not be apprehended. Similarly, when words with similar phonic elements are not brought out in translation, the target expression shortfalls poetic suggestion (*dhvani*). In the translation of freely anchored aesthetic expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, we encounter linguistic clogging not in terms of primary meaning but due to the linguistic and aesthetic constraints in capturing the suggestive aspects. Nevertheless, when the translation succeeds in capturing the parameters of sound (*śabda*), that is, the structural elements of the source expressions, along with the meaning, reference, and other semantic features, then the lyrical beauty and aesthetic attributes of the expression can be maintained even in the translation of aesthetic expressions with poetic suggestions. However, the adaptation of ethnic performances into another form is even more challenging. Sacred groves become the performing yards for ethnic performances like Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal, and taking them away from those sacred groves will bring down the aesthetic beauty of the performance. The flexibility of freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestion help to add novelty to any artistic composition. Mythological stories can be reintroduced into an artistic composition without losing their aesthetic appeal with the help of freely anchored aesthetic expression with suggestions. Not just mythological stories, mythical characters, though bound by social and

cultural ties, resurrect across various cultures even after centuries through literary works. As Ānandavardhana says, though the path of art is being explored by numerous people of the past, with the suggestive potential of words, the path of art will still be infinite.

Chapter 2

Symbolic Power of Words

Human beings and non-human species use expressions either to elicit a response or to reveal a thought or emotion to themselves or others (Heintz & Scott-Phillips, 2021). On the face of it, they use different kinds of expressions in strikingly different evolutionary ways (Tomasello, 1999; Henrich & Muthukrishna, 2021; Heyes, 2018). Expressions[7], as a general term, include responses to stimuli, words or utterances in a language, non-linguistic communicative devices, and language-neutral propositions. Arguably, *some* expressions used by non-human species[8] and human beings are different in kind. The expressions, for example, elicited by single-cell organisms and many non-human species are tied to the here and now and are rigid, regimented, and often repetitive[9]. In significant contrast to this, *some* human expressions are fluid, flexible, and fuzzy. Though some non-human expressions show certain characteristic features of human expressions, such expressions ranging from the waggle dance of bees to vocal and gestural communication in primates[10] are constrained and restricted compared to human expressions (Karl von Frisch, 1927, 1953; Gallistel, 2011; Chittka, 2022). Further, there are claims based on "substantial evidence" about the human capacity to generate expressions[11] that it is "a species-specific biological property, essentially unique to humans, invariant among human groups, and dissociated from other cognitive systems (Chomsky, 2017, p. 203)". Human expressions, including linguistic and non-linguistic communicative expressions, are thus arguably unique, distinct, and unparalleled in the animal world. This thesis considers the case of

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[7] It may be noted that the thesis uses this term in a broad sense. This is similar to the use of "symbol" in Goodman's work on aesthetics. "Symbol", Goodman (1976) says, is "a very general and colourless term. It covers letters, words, texts, pictures, diagrams, maps, models, and more but carries no implication of the oblique or the occult. The most literal portrait and the most prosaic passage are as many symbols, and as 'highly symbolic', as the most fanciful and figurative". For some recent uses of the term "expression", see Sias & Bar-On (2015).

[8] Even after having some close interactions with non-human species, it is probable that humans are not yet fully exposed to all forms of non-human interactions. However, based on all available shreds of evidence, it can be said that [most] non-human expressions are characterised by rigidity and fixity.

[9] However, studies show that within certain restricted domains, some non-human expressions are flexible. For example, recent studies on Arabian babblers show that the same non-distinct signals are used for "functional performance" and "communicative performance". "Communicative additives" "that are not part of the core elements of a signal" are added to emphasise the signalling. (Ben Mocha, Mundry & Pika 2019).

[10] Heintz & Scott-Phillips (2021)

[11] Linguistic expressions in this case.

aesthetic expressions in this discourse of intellectual interest and argues that an additional level of flexibility is added to human aesthetic expressions. The thesis attempts to account for the characteristic features of human aesthetic expressions[12] by employing and developing the theoretical tools of classical Indian aesthetics. The ensuing new interdisciplinary[13] field of study may be called *cognitive aesthetics*[14].

Just as there can be multiple paths to arrive at a single destination, human beings can convey and entertain the very same idea through a variety of expressions. However, not everything is expressed directly, even when it is expressed through words or gestures. Some are meant to be expressed explicitly, while others are meant to be expressed implicitly. Different verbal functions such as denotation, metaphorical indication, suggestion, or a combination of these are used in literary and artistic expressions to meet this expressive need and requirement. Furthermore, these verbal functions help to add layers of meaning to artistic and literary expressions, and they complement each other to varying degrees in various aesthetic expressions. Additionally, there can be some overlapping and blending of these verbal functions in aesthetic expressions. However, aesthetic expressions differ from communicative expressions and carry some unique, distinguishable characteristics compared to other linguistic expressions with literal and metaphorical meanings. Based on these distinctions, expressions can be categorised into three types: *tightly anchored* non-human expressions (TNE), *openly anchored* linguistic expressions (OLE), and *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions (FAE). This chapter argues that openly anchored linguistic expressions are in the form of 'reporting' and metaphorical expression is a form of 'showing'. In contrast, freely-anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestion are a form of 'hiding'. Freely-anchored aesthetic expressions prompt the connoisseur to perceive the object in a new light, revealing hidden meanings and associations.

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[12] The term "aesthetic expressions" hereafter considers only human aesthetic expression.

[13] Goodman (1976) draws up a study of expressions thus. "Systematic inquiry into the varieties and functions of symbols has seldom been undertaken. Expanding investigation in structural linguistics in recent years needs to be supplemented by and integrated with intensive examination of nonverbal symbol systems, from pictorial representation on the one hand to musical notation on the other, if we are to achieve any comprehensive grasp of the modes and means of reference and of their varied and pervasive use in the operations of the understanding".

[14] For a coevolutionary proposal on human and non-human biotic aesthetics, see (Prum, 2013) Also see for a bioaesthetics, (Gesche Westphal)-Fitch, W. Tecumseh Fitch, Chapter 1 - Bioaesthetics: The evolution of aesthetic cognition in humans and other animals (Julia F. Christensen, Antoni Gomila,2018) For another recent proposal that seeks to expand aesthetics to include non-human machine aesthetics, see French F.2022)

These types of expressions have been found in numerous literary works written since ancient times. They have been prevalent in various forms, such as epics, plays, poems, and prose. Despite the inherent aesthetic beauty and cultural richness of folk songs, ritualistic songs, and oral songs of indigenous and ethnic communities, these artistic expressions are often overlooked and ignored in academic pursuits that focus on aesthetics. However, there are subtle suggestions lurking in such songs. This chapter analyses selected expressions from sacred invocatory songs (*Thottam pāttu*) sung during Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ performances to explore the possibility of having freely anchored aesthetic expressions among the oral songs of ethnic communities.

Freely anchored aesthetic expressions are open to move beyond denotation and what is directly represented through words or signs. They do not break away from the existing linguistic structure but rather explore the possibility of a creative transformation. The creative transformation of aesthetic expressions can happen at the level of sign, word, sentence, or even a literary text as a whole. These temporary associations are always flexible, making freely anchored aesthetic expressions different from tightly anchored non-human expressions and openly anchored linguistic expressions. However, in openly anchored linguistic expressions, if the metaphorical meaning is equated with the literal meaning by denying the presence of additional layers of meaning, then there is a risk that the suggested meaning may also be overlooked or dismissed. In doing so, such literary expressions miss the chance to explore the additional level of flexibility inherent to freely anchored aesthetic expressions. Similarly, if a divine character is equated solely with the individual who plays that role, it diminishes the aesthetic beauty of the performance, and the focus completely shifts to personal sentiments. By neglecting the suggested meanings inherent in the act, the enchantment of the aesthetic experience is compromised. Appreciating and exploring these broader perspectives explored in the performance enhances the aesthetic beauty of the performance and allows for a more profound engagement with the performance.

Tightly anchored non-human expressions

Certain non-human species employ a variety of signals for cognitive and communicative purposes. Animals use vocal and gestural communicative expressions for purposes such as locating food sources, warning calls, and mating rituals. For example, vervet monkeys make

warning calls to indicate the presence of different predators. The responses of other monkeys to the warning call vary appropriately. In most of these cases, non-human species employ various communicative expressions by considering others will believe in a specific act or behave in a particular way. Here, communicative expressions are mainly used for transferring information that influences the receiver's behaviour in the present or future. However, the connection between the communicative expression and expressed meaning needs to remain consistent regarding non-human receivers. Even a slight alteration in this connection may not be effective or perceivable for non-human recipients. Hence, non-human expressions are mostly tightly anchored with respect to signs that are rigid, regimented, and often repetitive in nature. A step forward from tightly anchored non-human expressions begins at the literal level of human communicative expressions, named as openly anchored linguistic expressions.

Openly anchored linguistic expressions

Human beings use communicative expressions to inform, persuade, and entertain themselves or others. On the literal level, one of the purposes of language use is to facilitate communication in human and non-human interactions. Hence, conveying factual information and expressing ideas clearly and accurately is prioritised at the literal level. However, human communicative and aesthetic expressions differ drastically from non-human communicative expressions. Humans use symbols as a means to convey meaning to other human beings. These symbols can be words, images, gestures, or any other form of representation. Besides, human communicative and aesthetic expressions are deeply intertwined with cultural and historical contexts.

In Indian linguistic tradition, the literal aspect of a word that is directly expressed is known as the "*vācaka śabda"* (expressed sound) of a word. *Vācaka śabda* gives the *vācyartha* (literal meaning) of a word through a function called *abhidhā* (customarily translated as a denotative function) and forms the first variety of meaning. In certain Indian linguistic traditions, the relation between expressed sound (*vācaka śabda*) and literal meaning (*vācyartha*) is considered to be arbitrary[15]. There can be different expressed sounds in different languages to denote the same object. The literal meaning of words remains relatively unchanged throughout one's life,

[15] In western linguistic tradition this idea was put forward by De Saussure. He agrees that there is no natural or necessary connection between the sound and meaning of a word (De Saussure, 1966).

making it easier to communicate effectively. Within the literal level, the users of that language only have to choose a specific word that is apt for signification, which is already mapped to its meaning at the literal level. However, within the literal level, there seems to be an openly anchored relation between the expressed sound and its literal meaning. The term "*openly anchored*" is intentionally used here to suggest certain features shared by expressed sound and literal meaning. At the literal level, it is only a process of recalling the appropriate word and its usage. There is not much significant creative vision associated with this process. It is only a process of selecting appropriate words and meanings that fit the context. However, human languages are not static or stagnant across ages. Constant interactions with the same structure show that change is inevitable. Linguistic expressions also evolve with continuous use. In that process, new relationships are formed. Hence openly anchored linguistic expressions are categorised as a secure yet slightly permeable kind of relationship. Though this is the case, not everything is explicitly stated in human communicative and aesthetic expressions. Conventional language rules are intentionally violated in some human communication to satisfy certain needs or for aesthetic purposes. To serve such purposes, the meaning of a linguistic expression can be literal or metaphorical. However, certain communication rules are intentionally violated in non-human interactions to satisfy specific needs based on particular situations.

Tactical deception in non-human communication

Human and non-human species typically use communication strategies to convey a particular "belief" or idea that they hold, or they want the receiver to react in a particular manner to a message. When animals give an alarm call, their typical intention as a messenger is to alert or warn the receiver. Certain calls and gestures have fixed meanings that convey a particular message that is appropriate to the context and situation. Studies have shown that certain non-human species exhibit the ability to develop strategies of "tactical deception" to employ in a variety of social situations. For example, "subordinate adult bonnet macaque males often give out loud predator alarm calls when they are being chased by more dominant males, even if there are no predators in the vicinity" (Sinha, 2003. p.1029). The alarm call can be identified as misleading from the behaviour of the subordinate adult bonnet macaque. "A victim of aggression emitted a false predator alarm call on being chased but continued to give this call even as he descended from the tree and continued to walk on the ground". (Sinha, 2003. P. 1029). If there

were a natural predator in the vicinity, the messenger being a potential prey, would not have behaved the same way. Although some familiar language usages developed within a group of species for communicative purposes may be temporarily disrupted for communicative purposes, their use is mostly limited to the speaker who has adopted the deceptive act in non-human interactions. Interestingly, in the non-human interaction quoted above, "the aggressor did not appear to have noticed the internal inconsistency of the victim's deceptive act" (Sinha, 2003. p.1029). In significant contrast to this, though some conventional language rules are intentionally violated in human communicative and aesthetic expressions, they will not disrupt the flow of communication. Instead, it can convey some additional meanings[16]. Hence, openly anchored linguistic expressions also include a different category called *bounded* metaphorical expressions[17].

Bounded metaphorical expressions

Verbal and visual metaphors are frequently used in communicative and aesthetic expressions to symbolise feelings, thoughts, or concepts. In metaphorical expressions, the literal meaning is either completely discarded or partially set aside due to its incompatibility in literal meaning. The meaning that thus emerges, where the denotation is impeded, and a different but related meaning arises and attains coherence, is called *lakshyārtha* (metaphorical meaning), and the verbal function that conveys it is called *lakshanāvritti* (metaphorical function). The specified mission of metaphorical meaning is over with modifying the expressed meaning of the sentence to be literally congruent. It functions only to the extent necessary to produce a sensible and congruent meaning for the linguistic expression.

The presence or use of the metaphorical meaning will not be noticed in the absence of a literal meaning. Hence, the metaphorical meaning remains connected to the literal meaning. Once the metaphorical meaning is clear, the literal meaning becomes congruent. When a relation connecting the literal and metaphorical meaning is identified, metaphorical expressions can offer

[16] *evamanayā lakṣaṇayā pañcavidhayā viśvameva vyāptam* (The whole world is pervaded by this indicative function Ānandavardhana, 1990)

[17] Heintz & Scott-Phillips (2021) distinguish human expressions from non-human animal expressions by sketching the "unleashed" character of the former. Following this, the thesis distinguishes aesthetic expressions with *dhvani* by sketching the unique characteristics of suggestive expressions.

profound and meaningful thoughts and ideas that are not explicitly expressed[18]. On the other hand, the meaning is literally expressed in literal expressions. It is direct. Hons of literary merits, a literal expression is a form of 'reporting'. Such expressions are used to convey information or describe something straightforwardly and factually, as in legal documents and scientific writings. In contrast, metaphorical expressions reveal many things that have been overlooked while focusing on the literal meaning. Metaphorical expressions serve as a means of 'showing'. Instead of explicitly stating something, metaphorical expressions bring together two unrelated concepts and help us see them differently. It pushes the literal word beyond its literal meaning and metaphorically indicates an associated meaning. Hence, metaphorical expressions differ from tightly-anchored non-human expressions. Unlike the deceptive signs used in non-human communication, human beings can identify the purpose behind the "deceptive" signs. Typically, language users can readily understand metaphorical expressions. Human beings are so accustomed to using metaphorical meanings in literary and communicative expressions. The incompatibility of the literal meaning often goes unnoticed unless consciously analysed. The intended purpose is immediately realised. By substituting a different meaning associated with the literal meaning, the incompatibility in literal meaning is also resolved. Hence, using metaphorical expressions in communicative and aesthetic expressions is not deceptive, as the language user intends to convey the metaphorical meaning through an unintended literal meaning. Even so, in the realm of literary expression, not all meanings arising from a linguistic expression are exhausted. Human communicative and aesthetic expressions are often highly symbolic and can convey meaning beyond the literal and metaphorical meanings. They often facilitate the communication of abstract ideas, concepts, and emotional states. The denotative function of a word alone is not sufficient enough to capture the additional meaning that emerges from aesthetic expressions with suggestions. A different function of the word is required to capture the subsequent layers of meanings that follow as a benefit of the suggestive potential of words and meanings.

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[18]"*mukhyārthabādhe tadyoge rūḍhito 'tha prayojanāt / anyo 'rtho lakṣyate yatsā lakṣaṇāropitā kriyā //* MKpr-K_9 //" (Mammaṭa, 1967)

"Semantic capacity of words that occurs when the primary meaning is blocked and which is connected to the primary meaning either by convention or special purpose" (Catlin, 2006).

Freely-anchored aesthetic expressions

Traditionally, language is conceived as sound with meaning (Aristotle, 1963; Chomsky, 2011). The denotative aspect of words and expressions is commonly used in our daily utterances and is essential for mutual communication. Nevertheless, meaning does not always have to be explicitly expressed. Especially in literary works and in non-literal conversations[19], meaning can be intended or implied without being explicitly stated. In Indian aesthetics, this argument was first theorised around the ninth century CE by Ānandavardhana in *Dhvanyāloka*. According to Ānandavardhana, meaning, which is essential to a literary work and admired by connoisseurs, has two varieties: the literal (*vācya*) and the implied (*pratīyamāna*)[20] (Ānandavardhana, 1990). While the literal meaning of a literary work can provide essential details for language comprehension, it often falls short of portraying the rich and multifaceted interplay of human emotions that a work of art offers. For example, emotions cannot be conveyed literally, or rather emotions expressed literally may not progress to a state called aesthetic bliss (*rasa*). Hence, in literary expressions, the suggestive function is preferred over and above the denotative function to evoke an emotional response. The suggestive aspe *vyaṃjaka śabda* (suggestive sound), is implied through a function called *vyañjana* (suggestion), which gives rise to the *vyaṅgyārtham* (suggested meaning).

Even though suggested meanings are given higher esteem in literary creations, the literal meaning is in no way inferior to the suggested meaning. While the flexibility is limited at the literal level, literal meaning cannot be completely ignored. Denotative words and meanings are selected first, and this denotative meaning enables readers to delve further, even reaching the level of suggestion. The literal meaning of a literary expression provides an anchoring point that guides the direction of interpretation. It is a base for readers to build and explore, expanding their navigation trajectory. Capturing the implied meaning alongside the literal and metaphorical

[19] Grice (1989), in the article "Logic and Conversation", presents cases of ordinary talk exchanges with implied meaning and considers this within the ambit of the cooperative principle and conversational implicature. In contrast, Ānandavardhana presents cases of implied meaning in literary expressions and develops an aesthetic theory based on them, with wider applications. Though both these theorists talk about implied meaning, the formulation, implication, and scope of the theories are entirely different. Currie & Frascaroli (2021) have given a different account on the possibility of paraphrasing in poetry. However, the present author does not endorse it considering the arguments of and notions of meaning in this paper.

[20] "*kāvyasya hi lalitocita-sanniveśa-cāruṇaḥ śarīrasyevātmā sāra-rūpatayā sthitaḥ sahṛdaya-ślāghyo yo 'rthas tasya vācyaḥ pratīyamānaś ceti dvau bhedau*" (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 6). (Source, Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages, hereafter addressed as "GRETIL").

meaning of an expression is important in enriching one's aesthetic experience. However, the implied meaning cannot be reduced to the literal or metaphorical meaning in a literary expression.Though the texts and expressions of literary merits creatively employ literal and implied meanings, only those expressions where the literal meaning is subordinated and implied meaning with aesthetic appeal is termed as suggested meaning (*vyaṅgyārtham*), get prominence, are termed as *dhvani* or *aesthetic suggestion*[21] (Ānandavardhana, 1974). The suggested meaning elevates those literary expressions to a higher plane, revealing the magnificence and beauty hidden within them. It is through the suggestive function that openly anchored linguistic expressions are transformed into freely anchored aesthetic expressions.

The Descent to Rigidity: Literary Expression without Suggestion

A literary expression without suggestion is almost similar to any openly anchored linguistic expression. Facts, figures of speech, and emotions are directly expressed in such expressions. Literary expressions' aesthetic potential becomes restricted when they lack aesthetic suggestion and rely solely on literal meaning. Although embellished with some artistic adornments, these literary expressions seem less appealing due to their limited flexibility for interpretation. The flexibility of interpretation refers to the capacity of freely anchored aesthetic expressions to discover meanings that are not explicitly expressed, allowing readers to engage with the literary text in various ways. When a literary expression lacks interpretative flexibility, it descends to the level of an openly anchored linguistic expression, becoming more rigid and less engaging for readers. Openly anchored linguistic expressions are confined and constrained within their literal boundaries.

The Suggestive Rhythm of Sacred Songs

Sacred invocatory songs sung at the beginning of performances, such as Teyyam and Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ, are called *Thottampāttu*. *Thottam* is considered to be a derivative of the word "*sthotram*". The word also means surmise, creation, revival, and feeling (Namboodiri, 2016). During the Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ performance, the lead singer will recite the *Thottampāttu*, and other companions will

[21] "*yatrārthaḥ śabdo vā tam artham upasarjanīkṛta-svārthau / vyaṅktaḥ kāvya-viśeṣaḥ sa dhvanir iti sūribhiḥ kathitaḥ //*" (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 18) (Source, GRETIL).

repeat it. *Thottampāttu* is an invocatory song sung to awaken the intended deity. Anjaṭis are summarised versions of myths of ancestral gods and goddesses, while *Thottampāttu* is longer versions of the same. Such sacred songs of Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ narrate myths and legends related to the deities that are worshipped in sacred groves. In mythologies, there are instances of gods and goddesses descending to the earthly realm to live among humans by taking mortal forms for various reasons. Conversely, there are accounts of individuals who were born as humans but later ascended to divine forms. The stories of many gods and goddesses who descended to the earth with various purposes, along with the tales of those who have ascended to heaven, are narrated through these sacred songs. The origin, greatness, and appearances of these deities are described in these songs. These songs often depict divine figures who take on human forms to protect, guide or fulfil a specific mission. Some of these songs portray ferocious gods and goddesses who came to destroy evil and restore balance. These sacred songs illustrate the complex relationship between the divine force and humans and illustrate the interplay between the human and divine realms. Though they praise the intended deities, they add local colour and flavour to the narratives. Along with lyrical beauty, such locally approved myths are important historical records. They narrate the life and life history of common people. Through the preservation and transmission of these songs through oral tradition, they have been passed down from generation to generation, maintaining their linguistic significance and cultural relevance.

The linguistic importance of *Thottampāttu* is undeniable. These songs are composed in narrative styles and are known for their content and style. These songs were created in different eras and have been passed down through different traditions. *Thottampāttu* has evolved over time, with songs being created in different periods, reflecting their respective eras' cultural and linguistic shifts of their respective eras. The language form of *Thottampāttu* is diverse, such as the Tulu-Carnatic style, Tulu Malayalam style, North-Malabar rural style, pure Malayalam style, Manipravala style and Sanskrit style (Namboodiri, 1981).

Here is a literary expression taken from the *anjaṭi* of the deity called Moorkanad Karumakan. Karumakan is worshipped as the son of Lord Shiva and Goddesses Parvati. He was born when Lord Shiva assumed the form of a Kirāta (hunter). Karumakan is described as the mighty god of deep blue hue who reigns in the thicket of the forest. He always carries a weapon called *churika*

in his hands. It is believed that with his *churika* he could slay the wicked. Karumakan is known by various names such as Pērilān, Vēṭṭay Karumakan, Nīttil Karumakan, and Kaṇṇi Karumakan.

കോട്ടമകന്ന നൽധ്വനി കേട്ടു ഞെട്ടിയുറഞ്ഞ തീയിൽ
ആട്ടമതിട്ടു മുമ്മൊഴി വാക്കു ചെയ്തടിയാരെയും നീ
കോട്ടമകന്ന നിത്യവും രക്ഷ ചെയ്ക കൃപാമുരാരെ

(Peethambaran, 2017, 79)

Grief has moved away with the **fine rhythm** that condensed the flame
By dancing on it and speaking words so dear
By keeping the sorrow away, Protect us forever.

The literary expression is an invocation that seeks blessing and protection from the deity Karumakan. The poem highlights the significant role of the deity in offering solace and support to the devotee by acting as a shield against sorrow. The profound impact of the deity in overcoming grief and finding solace in the fine rhythm (*naldhwani- nala dhwani*) is expressed through the literary expression. It explores the transformative potential of connecting with the divine force and finding comfort in divine hands. It is a heartfelt expression of devotion and reverence towards the deity. The speaker acknowledges that the deity acts as a shield by keeping sorrow away, thereby providing long-lasting protection and comfort.

The literary expression begins by stating that the grief has been dispelled or lessened by the fine rhythm. Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ is performed at night, along with the rhythmic drum beats. The music from the percussion instruments such as *chenda* and *tudi* used during a Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ performance can be taken here as the source for fine rhythm. Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ is performed at night with the background of burning coconut leaves. The literary expression can be interpreted as grief has subsided in the fire that was condensed with the rhythmic beats of the musical instruments. Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ performers also provide a word of solace to the devotees. The words of the divine figure can also be considered as a fine rhythm. Then, the literary expression can be interpreted as, by hearing the soothing words of the deity, the grief subsided in the dancing fire. The fine rhythm can also be interpreted as the song sung by the performer. His grief subsided in the fire that condensed by

hearing *Thottampāttu* he sang for the deity. Those words have condensed or transformed the emotional turmoil of the devotee, and the sorrow has swept aside in the flames that danced. The grief departed from their minds as they sang the *Thottampāttu*. The *Thottampāttu* quoted above moves beyond the suggested meaning and can be regarded as an example of freely anchored aesthetic expression. However, there are *Thottampāttu* that focus on linguistic devices and lyrical beauty. Sometimes those expressions get limited to the literal level without being raised to the suggestive level.

The Sacred Fusion: Confluence of Divine and Human in Ethnic Performance

Ethnic performances, rooted in specific cultural traditions and practices, are often intricately intertwined with the beliefs and values they uphold. These performances often provide a unique opportunity for people to momentarily escape from their daily concerns and take themselves through a mesmerising and transformative journey. These performances often become a source of solace for many. They provide a space where individuals can immerse themselves in the creative and spiritual side of themselves. It is important to recognize the boundary between the aesthetic and ritualistic aspects of ethnic performances to enable us to engage with them in a more nuanced, informed, and respectful. In most cases, aesthetic and ritualistic elements appear to be intertwined. However, with the help of *dhvani* theory, to an extent, this aesthetic dilemma can be resolved.

Ethnic performances like Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ depict stories of humans who are transformed into gods. In these performances, the performers creatively transform themselves into gods. Though the individual identity of the performer does not suit the context of the performance, a relationship is established between the performer and the character. Thus, in a performance, an actor is not identical to the character, but a relationship is metaphorically indicated. Performers revered as deities (*kōladāri*) dressed in specific costumes are used only as a model to represent the divine characters depicted in the performance. These *kōladāri'*s are used metaphorically to achieve a specific purpose. In some performances, masked faces are intentionally used in the performance to indicate an associated meaning. In Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ performances, a mask is not a mere object that the performer wears during the performance. It becomes an inseparable part of the performance, giving the performer a different identity. *Mughzthezhuth* (sacred artistic decorations on the face)

is an important process that transforms the artist into a character. The performer selected for performing the role of a heroic character also exhibits certain skills of the character or is able to recreate them during the performance. By wearing long headgear and by performing adventurous tasks using weapons, the heroic nature of the character is suggested. This suggested quality is not part of the literal meaning. This special purpose for using this *kōladāri* as a metaphor is expressed through suggestion. A metaphor is used to emphasise this suggested meaning. In both these cases, something is considered impossible according to conventional rules. The identity of the performer in real life is that of a human being, but the characters they adorn are mostly divine. Though there is divinity within every individual, it is not realised by all. With the *mughathezhuth* and other adornments, the individual features of the performer is sidelined, and the divine character is projected. By focusing on the similarity between the performer and the divine character, the impossibility of being the character is negated. Every performer opts for different techniques in the performance to suggest these relations. In the case of ritual art forms, the masked body and the painted face are not confined solely to the literal meaning of decorating the face with some colours. In performances like Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ, if the performer (*kōladāri*) is identified the same as the divine character represented, it will force the audience to seek blessings from the performer as the identity of the divine character is fully identified on the individual performer. Once the audience captures this creative transformation of meaning, the suggested meaning immediately strikes them, and various emotions get suggested. The suggestive function adds additional flexibility to literary and artistic expressions.

Beyond the Literal: Flexibility in Freely Anchored Aesthetic Expressions with Suggestions

The expressions worn out by their popular usage do not excite or surprise the readers. They may not even produce an element of surprise. However, this is not the case with the suggested meaning. Suggestive sound (*vyaṃjaka śabda*) can suggest meanings that are different from the literal meaning. By suggesting a different meaning, it opens up the space for multiple interpretations. Rather than restricting the suggested meaning to a confined space that is restricted by various factors, the suggestive function releases them from all confinements. It helps to move beyond the literal meaning. At the suggested level, suggestive sound unveils suggestions that are not conventionally associated with them. In the case of suggestion, there is no permanent one-to-one relationship between the suggested word and the suggested meaning, as

is the case with the relationship between expressed sound and the literal meaning. The suggestive potential of words is not constant. Unlike the rigid semantic structure allowed in the expressed sound and expressed meaning, aesthetic suggestion opens up the space for creative interpretation. It constantly challenges the rigid semantic structure. The same object in different contexts is capable of suggesting different meanings, though they have the same literal meaning.

Words transcend their commonly perceived state and the meaning conventionally attributed to them through the suggestive function. The function involves constant experimentation with the rigid and monotonous structure of openly anchored linguistic expressions. Aesthetic suggestion aims to surpass the limitations of this structure and explore new possibilities rather than completely dismantling the existing framework. It allows authors to escape the constraints imposed by prescribed formats and rules, offering a way to break free from conventional setups without destroying them. Aesthetic suggestion continuously seeks novel ways of creating or recreating something rather than reproducing the same. In addition to the expressed meaning of the words, due to the symbolic potential of words in a sentence, an array of ideas get suggested. The suggestive potential of words exercised through suggestive sound creatively transforms the literal meaning and exposes the suggested meaning hidden within them. This suggestive potential of words is indeed a defining characteristic of human language and can be found universally. Literary expressions across different cultures and languages have the potential to convey meaning beyond the literal, adding to the beauty of aesthetic expression. The creative use of language and its suggestive potential of words is a unique and universal trait of human beings, setting them apart from other non-human species. It highlights the potential of words to transcend their surface-level meanings and communicate on deeper levels, enriching the artistic and expressive capabilities of human beings.

The Ripple Effect: Advantages of Freely Anchored Aesthetic Expressions with Suggestions

The suggestive potential cannot be identical to denotation or indication, though it derives assistance from denotation or indication[22]. The suggested meaning may arise in some instances after the literal meaning is understood, while in others, it may come after the indicated meaning is understood. In all these contexts, there is no rule dictating that the suggestive function should

[22] "*pratīyamānaṃ punar anyad eva vastv asti vāṇīṣu mahā-kavīnām /*
yat tat prasiddhāvayavātiriktaṃ vibhāti lāvaṇyam ivāṅganāsu // DhvK_1.4 //" (Ānandavardhana, 1974. 6).

occur once and then cease. One suggested meaning may lead to another, which in turn leads to another, and so on. It is this flexibility that distinguishes freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions from openly anchored linguistic expressions and bounded metaphorical expressions. Literal and metaphorical meanings, in one way, have limitations in their scope for improvisations. Though we use them repeatedly in various expressions, in the end, they tend to be similar to the literal meaning of the expression. On the other hand, for freely anchored aesthetic expressions with suggestions, it is possible to present a different perspective or suggest a distinct idea, offering a greater range of possibilities.

In literary expressions, we cannot rely solely on the literal meaning to create an aesthetically enriching and stimulating composition. Though the metaphorical meaning differs from the denoted meaning, its purpose is to give depth and significance to the literal meaning. It does not surpass or go beyond the literal meaning. It is not aesthetically pleasing to name any emotions or to literally express them in literary works. Even if we convey the same emotions to the audience by literally naming an emotion, it merely becomes a method of relaying information rather than creating an emotionally enriching aesthetic experience. Hence, in literary expressions, the suggestive potential of words is utilised to its fullest, resulting in a higher level of flexibility. However, the suggestive potential is not limited to words alone. Suggestors cover a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic elements such as sounds, sound clusters, morphemes, syntactical arrangement, words, and sentences. Even silence holds suggestive potential and can contribute to the evocation of aesthetic emotions.

Chapter 3

Resonance of Dhvani in Visual Expressions

Human beings express their thoughts and feelings primarily through verbal and visual expressions. Words, images, colours, and sounds serve as a means to convey various human emotions. Each artwork possesses unique characteristics and styles that set it apart from other artistic creations. Moreover, each artistic expression is distinct in its presentation and appearance. This diversity and individuality contribute to the richness and variety of the artistic landscape, providing connoisseurs with many opportunities to engage, enjoy, and appreciate. In *Viṣṇudharmottara purāṇa*, an ancient Indian text, there is an account of the correlation between different forms of art. *Viṣṇudharmottara purāṇa* presents a dialogue between Markandeya and King Vajra, where Markandeya emphasises that having an acquaintance with the science of dancing can greatly aids in comprehending the rules of painting with ease (Nardi, 2003). This suggests that the different art forms are interconnected and that a deeper understanding of one art form can lead to a deeper understanding of other art forms. People who appreciate one art form in a particular way are more likely to appreciate other art forms in a similar way. If there is an interrelationship between various forms of art, then is it possible to find some relations in the way in which these different forms of art are enjoyed and appreciated?

The Theory of Suggestion

Ānandavardhana, in his monumental work *Dhvanyāloka* (Light on the doctrine of suggestion), theorised the concept of *dhvani* (aesthetic suggestion) and formulated the philosophy of aesthetic suggestion[23]. According to Ānandavardhana, the essence of a literary work does not solely reside in the literal meaning of the words but rather in the suggested meaning evoked by the suggestive potential of words. Ānandavardhana classifies aesthetic suggestion into two types: *avivakṣita vācya dhvani* and *vivakṣitānyapara vācya dhvani*[24]. Literary expressions in which the literal meaning is not intended and is aesthetically taken over by the suggested meaning are

[23] Ānandavardhana's theory of dhvani is one of the most important and influential theories of poetics in the Indian tradition.

[24] "*sa cāsāv avivakṣita-vācyo vivakṣitāny apara-vācyaś ceti dvividhaḥ sāmānyena /* (Ānandavardhana, 1974. 39)".

called *avivakṣita vācya dhvani*, and literary expressions where the literal meaning is intended but the literal meaning is subordinated due to the presence of aesthetically appealing suggested meaning are called *vivakṣitānya-para-vācya dhvani*[25]. Ānandavardhana further systematically classifies suggestive expressions into various varieties and subvarieties. Ultimately, he concludes that listing all the subvarieties of *dhvani* is almost impossible. However, the divisions he has provided in *Dhvanyāloka* are extensive enough to offer a comprehensive understanding of the different types of suggested meanings

***Avivakṣita-vācya dhvani* (Indication-based suggestion)**

Literary expressions where the literal meaning of the expression is shifted to a different associated meaning or entirely set aside due to the literal incompatibility are known as metaphorical expressions. If the suggested meaning is more aesthetically prominent than the metaphorical meaning, such expressions are known as *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*. In *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*, the suggested meaning is derived from the metaphorical meaning of the expression. The literal meaning is incongruous in such literary expressions, and the suggested meaning is perceived only after comprehending the metaphorical meaning. Thus, *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani* is also known as *lakṣaṇāmūla dhvani.* There is a specific purpose in using literally incongruous words in literary expressions, and by identifying that purpose, the suggested meaning of the expression can be generated. While the unintended literal meaning may arise and contribute to suggestion in *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*, literal incompatibility at the denotative level often goes unnoticed, and only the suggested meaning gains prominence.

ഉണ്ടുകരിവൂർക്കുന്നു മഠമതെന്ന് വിഖ്യാതമായിടും
പണ്ടുപണ്ടേ മികച്ചെഴും ദിക്കിൽ നിന്നു വരുന്നിതാ ഞാൻ
കണ്ടുഭവാനോടൊത്തു നീ കാലവിദ്യകളഭ്യസിപ്പാൻ
വേണ്ട കൃപയുണ്ടാകണമേ സൽഗുരോ മഹനീയത്രുപാ
ഇണ്ടലുണ്ടാകുമെന്മകനെ മണലിലെഴുതിയാലോ
കൊണ്ടുവരേണം ആയിരം നാഴി പൊൻപൊടി പൊന്മകനെ
It is famously known as "Undukarivoorkunku" monastery
From all famous directions, I come seeking you

[25] "*avivakṣita-vācya-vivakṣitānya-para-vācyatvena dhvanir dvi-prakāraḥ prakāśitaḥ* (Ānandavardhana, 1974. 39)".

Having seen you , I yearn to learn the knowledge of time with you dear Lord
May your grace be bestowed upon me, O glorious form
There will be sorrow my son if it is written in the sand
Bring thousand measures of golden dust, golden son

(Peethambaran, 2017, p. 82)

The speaker in the *thottam* expresses a strong desire to receive blessings from the deity. The speaker believes that being in the presence of the deity will grant them the opportunity to acquire knowledge and wisdom. The speaker humbly requests the grace and guidance of the deity, indicating a desire for prosperity and spiritual enrichment. They acknowledge the transient nature of worldly sorrows and seek spiritual understanding and growth. The speaker believes that being in the presence of the deity will grant them wisdom and a deeper comprehension of the passage of time. They express a longing for divine favour and assistance in their spiritual journey. A deep reverence for the divine and a quest for spiritual enlightenment is shown in these words. The literary expression suggests that there will be sorrow if his words are written in sand, but the divine command is to bring a thousand measures of golden dust. This implies the need to prepare one's mind before embarking on a spiritual quest. However, the speaker acknowledges that this path will not be easy. Metaphorically, it can be seen as a call to offer devotion, faith, and surrender to God in order to mitigate the sorrows that may come their way. These lines emphasise the power of devotion and trust in God during hard times. By maintaining unwavering faith and dedication, one can find solace and overcome the challenges that are part of the transient nature of life. In this expression, "Bring thousand measures of golden dust, golden son", the phrase "golden son" is literally incongruous. However, it suggests that for the deity, the devotee is precious as gold. It implies that whatever the person is searching for lies within themselves. Instead of searching for wisdom externally, if they seek it, it will be more rewarding. The finely powdered golden dust within him suggests that he is already a blessed soul.

Avivakṣita-vācya dhvani is further divided into two categories *arthāntare saṅkramitam* and *atyantatiraskṛta vācya dhvani*. In *atyantatiraskṛta vācya dhvani,* the literal meaning is completely incompatible and is entirely set aside. In this type of dhvani, the literal meaning is discarded as it cannot align with the context. On the other hand, in *arthāntare saṅkramita vācya*

dhvani, the literal meaning is disregarded, requiring partial modification, leading to a shift in meaning towards a different associated meaning.

***Arthāntare saṅkramitam* (Suggestion of progressive denotation)**

In *arthāntare saṅkramitam*, the literal meaning is not entirely set aside but rather modified and shifted towards an associated meaning. The literal meaning is hindered due to its incompatibility in the literal meaning. However, instead of rejecting or abandoning the literal meaning completely, the literal meaning undergoes partial modification to overcome the literal incompatibility and align with the context. This shift in meaning enables the expression to convey a deeper meaning while retaining a connection with its literal meaning.

> ആരണർപോലുമൊന്നറിയാതെ പാർത്തുഴലുന്ന നിന്റെ
> ആദിയുമന്തവും മറിമായവും ബലവിക്രമങ്ങൾ
> കാരണമേതുമൊന്നറിയാതെ മൂഢരിൽ മൂഢനാം ഞാൻ
> കാംക്ഷ മുഴുത്തു നിൻ ചരിതാമൃതം പുകഴ്ത്താൻ പോറ്റി
> പാരമെഴുന്ന വൻ പിഴയെ പൊറുത്തു തുണക്കവേണം
>
> (Peethambaran, 2017, p. 82)

> Even Brahmins, without knowing wander in life
> Your beginning and end, delusion or mighty acts,
> without knowing any apparent reason,
> I, **fool among the fools**
> With ripened desire, am praising your history
> Assist me by forgiving this big mistake

The *thottam* begins by highlighting the idea that even individuals with extensive knowledge can wander aimlessly in life without grasping the real purpose of life. The speaker admits that he himself is one among the fools, lacking complete knowledge or understanding of the beginning or end of life. They are confused as to whether their experiences are mere illusions or significant events meant to test human will. They belong to the group of people who blame their fate without perceiving the greater picture or plan that life has yet to reveal. When the word “fool” is

used for the first time, it addresses a group of people who simply chant the name of god without understanding the real purpose behind them. Among them, the poet considers himself as a fool among fools because he does not do any action to please God. Beyond the literal meaning of the words, the *thottam* reflects a sense of humility and self-awareness as the speaker contemplates the mysteries of life and the speaker's own limitations. Despite their limited understanding of the world and its mysteries, the speaker expresses a genuine and ardent desire to praise the deity who possesses higher power. The speaker acknowledges his foolishness in not doing what others commonly practise. He sincerely longs to sing the deity's praises, driven by a sense of devotion towards him. He deeply longs for the deity's blessings to attain a broader perspective on life. The speaker humbly requests forgiveness for any mistakes they may have made in their attempt to praise the deity. This plea itself carries a significant implication, suggesting the speaker's awareness of their limitations, and this plea comes as a genuine request seeking guidance. The *thottam* conveys a sense of humility as the speaker willingly acknowledges humans' limitations in comprehending life's mysteries. However, they still maintain a sincere desire to seek meaning and answers to the unacknowledged questions of life, making them different from the rest. It serves as a plea for guidance in the pursuit of understanding and recognition, acknowledging their limitations along the way.

The literal, metaphorical, and suggested meanings are intricately employed in literary expressions. As illustrated through examples, words certainly have suggestive potential. However, the suggestive potential is not limited to words but extends beyond words to include nonverbal cues like tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions. These non-verbal elements can convey ideas, even without the use of words. For instance, a single suggestive gesture can communicate a message without any word being uttered. Ānandavardhana, while differentiating the function of denotation from implication, recognises the suggestive potential in various forms of expression, including musical notes and gestures. He highlights the suggestiveness of sentiments in music. Ānandavardhana acknowledges that even in the absence of auditory signals, gestures possess the ability to suggest ideas like literary expressions[26] (Ānandavardhana, 1974).

[26]"prakaraṇādy-avacchedena vyañjakatvaṃ śabdānām ity anumatam evaitad asmākam / kiṃ tu tad-vyañjakatvaṃ teṣāṃ kadācit svarūpa-viśeṣa-nibandhanaṃkadācid vācaka-śakti-nibandhanam / tatra yeṣāṃ vācaka-śakti-nibandhanaṃ teṣāṃ yadi vācya-pratītim antareṇaiva svarūpa-pratītyā niṣpannaṃ tad bhaven na tarhi vācaka-śakti-nibandhanam / atha tan-nibandhanaṃ tan-niyamenaiva vācya-vācaka-bhāva-pratīty-uttara-kālatvaṃ vyaṅgya- pratīteḥ prāptam eva /" (Ānandavardhana, 1996. 161)

He says, “The specific gesture (viz. side-glance) of the heroine has been described by the great poet in a way suggestive of unique charm” (Ānandavardhana, 1974). For example, the literary expression, *evaṃ vādini devarṣau pārśve pitur adhomukhī / līlā-kamala-patrāṇi gaṇayāmāsa pārvatī //* can be enacted on a stage. Even without the words, the suggested meaning can be conveyed through appropriate gestures, glance, and facial expressions. In this enactment, the literal meaning of Parvati counting the number of petals gets subordinated, and the suggested meaning can be elevated to a higher level through the skilful use of appropriate gestures and facial expressions. However, the suggestive potential of any form of expression depends on the context in which it is used as the same gesture carries different meanings in different contexts.

The Subtle Strokes: Dhvani in Visual Expressions

Similar to verbal expressions, visual expressions also hold the suggestive potential to communicate ideas and emotions without explicitly expressing them. While verbal expression focuses on spoken or written words, visual expressions like painting concentrate on colours, composition, brush strokes, and various artistic techniques to communicate the literal meaning. However, visual expressions do not necessarily rely on explicit meaning; they can also have implicit meanings. In visual expressions, suggested meanings derive from the denotative or metaphorical meanings conveyed through various elements, such as the choice of colours or the texture of brush strokes. The suggested meaning in painting invites viewers to interpret and engage with the work of art on a deeper level. The suggested meaning through visual expressions helps the viewers to traverse through the hidden narratives and emotions associated with the scene portrayed on the canvas. In paintings, the choice of colours can evoke specific emotions and sentiments. Even in visual expressions, suggested meaning is essential as it allows artists to convey complex emotions and thoughts that may be challenging to express solely through denotative meaning. It invites the viewer to interpret and engage with the work of art in a meaningful way. Each viewer may perceive and interpret the painting in their unique way, thereby adding richness and depth to the artwork. In the next section, various artistic expressions are analysed based on the different varieties of suggested meanings. The analysis of various aesthetic expressions based on the varieties of suggested meanings aims to further enhance our understanding and appreciation of the artwork.

***Artha-śakti-mūla dhvani* in paintings**

[27] This painting, titled "Radha's Confusion", belongs to the *Rasikapriya* series and is a Pahari painting dating back to the first quarter of the 19th century (Goswamy, 1986). The blue skin tone and the peacock feather on the head of the character help the viewers to identify the character portrayed as Krishna. The lady beside Krishna represents Radha. Krishna and Radha have spent the night together in Krishna's chamber. The presence of a peacock on the terrace and the colour of the sky indicate that it is early morning. Hoping to get back to her home as quickly as possible, Radha hastily puts on her clothes and prepares to leave Krishna's chamber. In her haste and confusion, she mistakenly wears Krishna's yellow garment (Goswamy, 1986). Although it may seem like a simple act, the yellow garment carries deeper meanings. Krishna notices the yellow-coloured upper garment on Radha's shoulder and realises that if she were to leave wearing his garment, the villagers would get to know about their secret meeting. The yellow garment (*pitambar*[28]) is well-known in the village as Krishna's attire. In response, Krishna calls her back, stretching his arms. The full appreciation of this painting requires an attentive and informed viewer who can unveil the underlying meaning. The denotative meaning of the image does not stop at expressing some common scene from the lives of the characters portrayed; it extends beyond that. If one fails to notice the yellow garment on Radha or fails to identify the context, the work of art cannot be fully enjoyed. If anyone misses these minute details of this image, they can satisfy themselves by considering it as an ordinary painting of Radha and Krishna. The context of the painting and some background information is essential for getting the suggested meaning from the painting. Hence this is an example of *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani*, where prior knowledge and background information are essential for grasping the suggested meaning. While all the elements are present to suggest the sentiment of humour (*hasya rasa*), with Krishna and Radha as the stimulus (*ālambana vibhāva*), the yellow

[27] Goswamy, B. N. (1986). *Essence of Indian art*. Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

[28] yellow coloured dress of Krishna

garment as the excitant (*uddīpana vibhāva*), and Radha's hurried movement as the consequent reaction (*anubhāva*), the apprehension and appreciation of the humour are not spontaneous. It goes through a noticeable sequence of events. Here, one must have prior knowledge about the yellow garment (*pitavasthra*) of Krishna to fully grasp the suggested meaning from the painting. Therefore, this painting is considered an example of *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani*.

Kaḷam ezhuth

Kaḷam ezhuth is an art form that is intricately connected with Sarppaṁtuḷḷal, with both art forms being performed in tandem. Artists use five types of powders to paint the *kaḷam*. Performers make a small hole in an empty coconut shell and fill it with natural colour powders to draw the *kaḷam*. They acquire the skill of painting with powders through continuous training and practice. A group of four members take approximately three hours to finish drawing the *kaḷam*. There are around forty-one types of *kaḷam*. Nāga kaḷam, Santāna kaḷam, Nāgarājāv kaḷam, Anantasayana kaḷam, Bhūtha kaḷam, Nāgakanya kaḷam, and Nāgayakṣi kaḷam are the popular ones.

Engaging the Senses: Visual and Verbal Expressions in the Performing Arts

Performing arts encompass a wide range of visual and verbal expressions. Performers rely on visual expressions such as body movements, gestures, facial expressions, costumes, stage design, and props in addition to verbal expressions like spoken words, to communicate a narrative and to evoke various emotions. Performers utilise verbal and visual expressions to communicate ideas and convey abstract concepts. This integration of visual and verbal expression is important in performing arts to create a more immersive and impactful experience for the audience. Visual expressions in a performing art refer to the physical movements, postures, costumes, and other visual attributes that contribute to a performance. Together with verbal expressions, visual expressions work in harmony to engage the audience and evoke emotional responses. In the realm of performing arts, the Nāṭya Śāstra, an ancient Indian treatise on performing arts, holds dramatic performance in the highest regard among all arts. The presence of *dhvani* in verbal expressions is demonstrated in the earlier sections. Visual expressions also communicate non-verbal messages, adding depth and nuance to a performance.

Exploring Ethnic Performances

Ethnic art forms bring life to myths and legends, carrying deep significance for the communities they belong to. These performances often possess a sense of authenticity and share an intimate connection with the land, people, and ancestral wisdom. They embrace a varied range of art forms, including music, dance, theatre and ritualistic practices. These performances often use elaborate costumes, vibrant choreography, rousing rhythms, and captivating oral narratives. Though many ethnic performances are not extensively documented, they play a crucial role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage, particularly those based on oral traditions. When we consider the combination of visual and verbal expressions in ethnic performances, a rich tapestry of artistic elements can be seen. The fusion of verbal and visual expressions creates an immersive experience for both the performers and to the audience. In ethnic performances like Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ, visual expressions take precedence. While there are invocatory songs like *Thottampātu,* they are usually presented separately at the beginning or end of a performance. During the main performance, visual expressions dominate, encompassing vibrant costumes, lively choreographed foot and hand movements, and carefully selected props.

***Vivakṣitāny apara-vācya dhvani* in Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ**

Dārikavadam is a Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ performance based on the myth of Kāli and Dārika. There is a short scene in the performance that serves as a subplot within the larger narrative, in which a local priest is being disturbed by some insects. The scene depicts a local priest in a small sacred grove, where he performs rituals and *pūja* at a small shrine. After offering some flowers to the deity, he takes a short nap. In the course of his sleep, the priest is disturbed by some insects that bite and bother him. Despite his attempts to shoo them away, he is unable to find peace and is forced to abruptly wake up from the middle of his sleep. Although it may appear insignificant or even comical to a certain audience, this particular scene holds a deeper meaning for those who are familiar with the context. Some audience laughs out loud after seeing the situation of an old man being disturbed by insects. But for an informed audience, this short scene is placed in between the main acts to provide a glimpse into future acts. The disturbance in the priest's sleep implies that his carefree mind has been disturbed. Here the sleep of the priest implies peace of mind. Previously, his concern was focused solely on taking care of a small shrine by performing some sacred rituals. But now, some external objects have entered his territory and created some nuisance. The scene is repeated again at a later point in the performance when the priest's sleep

is disrupted by the entry of the demon Dārika. The short scene of insects disturbing the sleep of an old priest was carefully placed in the beginning to give an indication of the future events that are about to happen. When some insects disturbed the priest in the middle of his sleep, his peaceful state of mind was disturbed. Similarly, the whole peaceful rhythm of the world was disrupted when Darika entered the Earth. There is also a comparison between Dārika and the troublesome insects. The parallel between the insects and Dārika is drawn, highlighting their insignificance compared to the priest and the powerful goddesses Kāli. Though insects disturbed the priest's sleep, he killed all of them after waking up. Similarly, Kāli took her birth to kill Dārika. When compared to the priest, insects are insignificant creatures. Likewise, when compared with Kāli's might, Dārika is insignificant. Just as the priest easily dispatches the insects after waking up, Kāli takes birth to vanquish Dārika. In this short scene, there is no literal incongruence; the denotative meaning is further extended to the suggested meaning. The placement of this scene at the beginning of the performance provides a glimpse into future events and sets the stage for the war and conflict that will unfold in the later part of the performance. In this way, the short scene of the priest being disturbed by insects serves as a subtle indicator of the subsequent events, connecting the disruption of the priest’s peace of mind to the disruption of the peaceful rhythm of the world with the entry of Dārika. The juxtaposition of seemingly inconsequential elements with significant plot points adds depth and layers of meaning to the performance for an informed audience.

The Universal Language of Dhvani in Aesthetic Expressions

Literary expressions turn out to be aesthetically pleasing with transformative potential based on the power of suggestion in words and meanings (Anandavardana, 1990). In literary compositions, expressions with aesthetic suggestions (*dhvani*) are often employed to transcend the limitations of denotation. Consequently, in aesthetic expressions with suggestions, the literal meaning of the expressions may shift to an allied meaning, be fully abandoned, or be overpowered or overshadowed by a different meaning. The potential to generate more than one meaning enhances aesthetic expressions in multi-layered interpretative works of art. However, the suggestive potential is not limited to the words of verbal expressions. It encompasses a wide range of non-verbal elements such as facial expressions, gesture, tone of voice and more. These non-verbal expressions, including the visual expressions, can convey subtle nuances in the

implied meaning that can complement or even overshadow the denotative meaning which is explicit. Ethnic performances also involve the use of gestures and symbols that bear cultural or spiritual significance. These performances create a space for the audiences to delve into the deeper layers of meaning and encounter a sense of transcendence or transformation. Within the context of ritual-based ethnic performances, a creative transformation takes place, inviting audiences to connect with the symbolic implications of gestures and objects that surpass their literal meanings.The theory of *dhvani* is not confined to any specific art form; it is universally applicable when *dhvani* becomes a form of expression. It revolves, reverberates and resonates across creative spaces.

Chapter 4

Paradox in Performance

Art forms are expressions of symbolic capacity that are finely tuned to diverse cultural contexts. Each culture possesses its own unique array of art forms, styles, and practices that are reflective of its history, traditions, and belief systems. Yet, artistic expression is nearly a universal aspect of human culture. The wide spectrum of artistic styles, techniques, and genres created by artists from various cultural backgrounds and historical periods stands as a testament to human beings' boundless creativity and imagination exhibited by human beings. Though art is ubiquitous, its appreciation is not universally shared. In a representative case, some individuals can and do listen to classical music for hours, while others may not or cannot derive enjoyment from them (Hargreaves & Adrian, 2008; Friedenberg, 2019)[29]. Similarly, in the case of modern painting, some people appreciate and derive pleasure from them, while others cannot or may not possess the inclination or attempt to interpret or appreciate them (Silvia, 2016). While exposure and familiarity with a particular form of art influence one's aesthetic judgements, these judgements are ultimately shaped by a complex interplay of cognitive and cultural factors.

Different cultures may exhibit their own unique stylistic and technical preferences, which can affect how they appreciate different art forms. Beyond these stylistic and technical variations, the meaning and significance of an art form can also vary across cultures. For instance, traditional art forms in one culture may be highly valued and appreciated, while they may be less appealing to individuals from different cultural backgrounds. However, acquiring a basic understanding of an artwork and progressing towards a more sophisticated evaluation and interpretation requires cultivating a different set of skills and knowledge. Familiarity with artistic styles and movements, along with the knowledge of cultural and historical contexts in which a work of art is created, can certainly nourish aesthetic sensibilities and help us to dissect and appreciate the nuances of an artwork, analysing and interpreting a work of art demands a distinct set of skills and expertise compared to the skill set required for perceiving and understanding tightly

[29] Similar is the case with other genres of music as well, see; Greenberg (2022).

anchored expressions or openly anchored linguistic expressions. This implies that the process of analysing a work of art differs significantly from merely comprehending its basic features and characteristics. To delve into the deeper layers of meaning hidden within a piece of art, one must be willing to look beyond the superficial details provided by the literal meaning of the expression. Ultimately, appreciating and interpreting a work of art requires cognitive structures and internal temperaments evolved from the cultural context.

This chapter analyses the presumption that there are different levels of appreciation in art. It discusses the factors that contribute to the individual variations in art appreciation; individual variation, even though human beings share the basic cognitive structure that makes art appreciation possible for the species. It examines the complexity and diversity of aesthetic responses to unfamiliar cultures, ranging from admiration to discomfort or rejection. This chapter argues that cognitive structures and cultural elements are behind aesthetic appreciation. It demonstrates how these two aspects are intertwined in the process of aesthetic appreciation. To illustrate this point, the chapter focuses on antagonistic expressions, where the implicit meaning of an aesthetic expression contradicts the explicit meaning of the expression. It focuses on a particular case of aesthetic expressions with suggestions, where the literal meaning of the expression is semantically opposite to the suggested meaning of the expression. Such situations, where two seemingly contradictory ideas co-exist together, may occur based on the suggestive potential of the words or meanings. Specifically, this chapter analyses the interaction between the conventionally encoded literal meaning of a literary expression and the implicit meaning of an aesthetic expression incorporating “use-driven modulations and manipulations” (Camp, 2006). In accordance with this, the chapter discusses the influence of the spectator’s cultural background on art appreciation and the process of meaning-making. Further, this chapter examines the nature and dynamics of these aesthetic interactions across cultural boundaries. It also highlights the significance of context, encompassing social, historical, and political factors, in shaping meaningful cross-cultural aesthetic interactions.

The Paradox in Literary Expressions

Authors use a variety of stylistic techniques to create compelling and captivating narratives that evoke emotional responses in readers. These techniques include vivid and sensory descriptions,

powerful imagery, metaphors, similes, dynamic characters and gripping dialogues. In addition, authors often introduce contrasting words and contradictory ideas to make their writing more engaging and alluring. A paradox is a statement or a situation that seems to contradict itself or is logically inconsistent but often holds a deeper meaning that is not immediately obvious. In literary expressions, seemingly contradictory ideas are sometimes skillfully merged together to create a paradoxical situation. The juxtaposition of two ideas that contradict each other in a literary expression generates potential suspense in the readers and compels them to seek a resolution for the apparent contradiction. In order to understand the paradox, the reader must engage in careful analysis and interpretation, which often prompts the reader to revisit the text. The process of deciphering the meaning of a paradox serves as a kind of gateway to deeper engagement with a literary work. As readers strive to comprehend the meaning of the paradox, they get fully immersed in the intricacies of the literary work. However, these semantic contradictions can manifest explicitly and implicitly in a literary expression, offering different layers of meaning to explore and unravel.

Literal Incompatibility and Semantic Conflict

In *Dhvanyāloka*, Ānandavardhana argues that aesthetic suggestion cannot be equated with denotation or indication though it draws support from denotation or indication. Ānandavardhana classified *dhvani* as two types: *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani* and *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani*. The interpretation of aesthetic expressions with suggestions can arise from either the apprehension of the implied meaning resulting from the literal and metaphorical meanings or from decoding the poet's intention through pragmatic strategies. In a literary work, semantic contradiction can manifest in two distinct ways. Firstly, a conflict in meaning can arise directly at the literal level, as in the case of a paradox or in metaphorical expressions. Secondly, a conflict in meaning can arise between the literal meaning and implied meaning. In the former case, the conflict in meaning is limited to the literal level and can be resolved through logical reasoning and by discovering a coherent explanation. Paradoxes, by their very nature, exhibit self-contradictory literal meanings. In a paradox, the contradiction is evident at the literal level, and it can be resolved by identifying a logical explanation and by delving deeper into the underlying content. However, in the case of paradox, though there is a semantic contradiction, it is literally congruent. In contrast, in the case of *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*, the literal meaning is partially or

wholly discarded due to literal incompatibility. The literal meaning of a literary expression is not intended in *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*. In such expressions, the literal incompatibility between the literal meaning and metaphorical meaning creates a semantic conflict. However, the semantic conflict lies at the literal level itself. This semantic conflict can be resolved by finding an associated meaning through secondary usage. In both these cases, once the apparent contradiction or the literal incompatibility is resolved, the literal meaning becomes congruent. The semantic contradiction in paradox and the semantic conflict in metaphorical meaning can be resolved. Both of them are openly anchored linguistic expressions as it does not involve the suggestive function for the resolution of conflict.

On the contrary, certain aesthetic expressions with suggestions, though coherent at the literal level, can have contextually varied implied meanings based on the suggestive potential of words or meanings. These expressions involve an interplay between the conventionally encoded literal meaning and the implied meaning derived from the suggestive potential of words. They belong to the category of *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani* as the literal meaning is literally compatible with the context. However, apart from the literal meaning, an additional meaning is also suggested. The meaning which is suggested may contradict or complement the literal meaning. As they belong to the category of freely anchored literary expressions, the ways in which these expressions are modulated or manipulated can vary depending on the context and the speaker's intention. When the literal meaning and the implied meaning share an antagonistic relationship, that is, when there is a semantic contradiction between the literal meaning and implied meaning, it may not be resolved through any linguistic operations like denotation, sentence meaning, or secondary usage. Such expressions do not express literal incompatibility. Besides, the explicit meaning aligns well with the context, eliminating any conflict at the literal level. The semantic contradiction is not literally given as a paradox. Hence, the reader must first recognise the presence of an implied meaning to see the semantic contradiction. Once the semantic contradiction between the literal and implied meaning is identified, it needs to be resolved by recognising the suggestive potential of the word and its meaning and connecting it with contextual cues.

Decoding the Metaphorical Complexity in Literary Expressions

Literary expressions with *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*, feature a deliberate shift from the literal meaning of an expression to an associated meaning through metaphorical indication. In such literary expressions, the literal meaning is literally incompatible, and it is entirely discarded. The metaphorical meaning thus formed is then subordinated by an implied meaning. Though there is a literal incompatibility, the selection of incongruous words in these expressions serves a distinct purpose. Therefore, the apparent conflict in meaning can be resolved by identifying the specific purpose behind it. In literary expressions with *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*, identifying the similarities between the literal and the metaphorical meanings requires more than the mere knowledge of words and their meanings. The same metaphor can evoke different implied meanings depending on the context in which it is situated. Similarly, the interpretation of an object is influenced by the surroundings, the setting, and the cultural associations tied to those contexts. Metaphor, as Elizabeth Camp states, is a "deeply context-sensitive linguistic phenomenon". Even so, once the appropriate relationship is established in line with the intended purpose, it enhances the aesthetic beauty of the expression. Given the right context, almost any word or expression can be used metaphorically to enhance its meaning or impact. However, in *avivakṣita-vācya dhvani*, the unintended literal meaning merely serves as a means to suggest the implied meaning. In the process, certain common attributes or qualities between the two objects are also revealed. On the other hand, in *vivakṣitānyapara-vācya dhvani,* the suggested meaning goes beyond the literal meaning of the literary expression. In some literary expressions, the implied meaning of the expression can be semantically opposite to the literal meaning of the expression. In such cases, the literal meaning remains congruent, but the implied meaning diverges in a semantically opposite direction.

Semantic Contradiction in Literary Expressions: Exploring the explicit prohibition and implicit permission

In literary expressions, there are cases where the literal meaning of the expression is of the nature of permission, and the implied meaning of the expression is of the nature of prohibition or vice versa. Despite the absence of literal incompatibility, a semantic contradiction arises between the literal and implied meanings. In such cases, the suggested meaning resolves the semantic contradiction. This challenges the reader to explore the contrasting meanings and invites the

reader to a deeper engagement with the text. In other cases, the presence of semantic contradiction gets literally expressed. The semantic contradiction is resolved from the literal interpretation of the literary expression itself. The use of semantic contradiction in literary expressions is a powerful tool to challenge the reader's assumptions. When used effectively, semantic contradictions can add depth to a literary work.

Decoding Semantic Paradox Based on the Suggestive Potential of Meaning

In literary expressions with *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani*, even after the literary meaning is fixed, an additional meaning is conveyed due to the suggestive potential of the meaning. In the case of *artha-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the suggestion is derived from the literal meaning itself, but the literal meaning remains complete and stands independent of the suggested meaning; even in the same setting, if the literal meaning is directed to a person, the suggested meaning can deviate and depart from the literal meaning and can be directed to another individual. The suggested meaning can be something completely different, and it can even be the opposite of the literal meaning. In literary expressions where the literal meaning of the expression is semantically opposite to the implied meaning of the expression, there will not be any literal incompatibility. Even then, a semantically opposite meaning gets suggested due to the suggestive potential of meaning, forming an antagonistic relationship between the literal and implied meaning, leading to a semantic contradiction. As the literal meaning is contextual, it is only after connecting the literal meaning with contextual cues that one can move to the suggested meanings. This is made possible with the flexibility of freely anchored aesthetic expressions.

The Poetry of Paradox: Exploring the Implied Paradox in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*

Certain literary expressions have the ability to convey an additional meaning through the suggestive potential of words, even when the literal meaning is compatible with the context. The suggested meaning can be non-contextual, but it need not be considered absurd or disconnected. Instead, a relationship can be identified between the two meanings. It requires the imaginative power of the reader to identify the suggested figure of speech. Such expressions belong to the variety of *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. In certain cases, if the suggested figure of speech is a paradox, then the semantic contradiction happens at the suggestive level. In such expressions, there is no literal incompatibility.

sarvaika-śaraṇam akṣayam adhīśam īśaṃ dhiyāṃ hariṃ kṛṣṇam /
caturātmānaṃ niṣkriyam ari-mathanaṃ namata cakra-dharam //

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 80)

Bow down, you all, to that god
Who is the only refuge for all, while he is deathless
(also, homeless),
Who is the supreme ruler (also, not the lord of
intelligence as also the lord of intelligence) ,
Who is Hari (also, green) as well as Krishna
(i. e. dark and also remover of sins),
Who is four fold in form (also, who is a clever person)
and also inactive,
And who is the destroyer of enemies (also, breaker of
wheels).
While he holds a wheel in his hand.

(Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 81)

The literal meaning of the literary expression is, offer your salutations to Lord Vishnu who is the sole abode of everyone (*sarvaika-śaraṇam*), who is imperishable (*akṣayam*), who is the supreme lord (*adhīśam*), who is the lord of intelligence (*dhiyāṃ īśa*), who is Hari (*hariṃ*) and Krishna (*kṛṣṇam*), who is fourfold in the form (*caturātmānaṃ*), who is beyond all actions, actionless (*niṣkriyam*), who is the destroyer of enemies (*ari-mathanaṃ*), who is the wielder of the wheel (*cakra-dharam*). Bow to him (*namata*). The literal meaning is complete in this case. There is no word *api* (even) to indicate the presence of paradox. In literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani,* the literal meaning stands independent of the suggested meaning. However, by the suggestive potential words, a figure of speech is suggested. Each word in the expression helps to suggest *virodha alankāra* (figure of contrast). The suggested meaning

highlights two contradictory characteristics or two contrasting qualities as adjectives that co-exist in the same person. There is a double meaning for each word, and hence the paradox. Here a figure of paradox is suggested. Although the suggestion is based on literal meaning, the implied meaning can stand independent of the literal meaning. Accordingly, the suggested meaning of the literary expression is to bow down to both the sole abode of everyone (*sarvaika-śaraṇam*) and the abodeless (*akṣayam*). Not the lord of intelligence (*adhīśa*) and lord of intelligence (*dhiyāṃ īśa*). The green-hued (*hariṃ*) as well as black-hued (*kṛṣṇam*). The active (*caturātmānaṃ*) and actionless (*niṣkriyam*). The destroyer of the wheel (*niṣkriyam*) and wielder of the wheel (*cakradharam*). In this example, the first part of the expression negates the second part of the expression. However, this contradiction is not literally given, and there are no words to denote such a contradiction. It is because of the suggestive potential of words that the semantic contradiction has emerged and resolved. In the literary expressions quoted above, the paradox is suggested. It is not literally expressed. Hence there is no semantic contradiction at the literal level. The literal expression is literally compatible. But the semantic expansion from literal to suggested meaning happens only in the case of freely anchored aesthetic expressions. The paradox can appear in openly anchored linguistic expressions. However, in openly anchored linguistic expressions, the paradox gets literally expressed.

The Paradox in Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ

The intentional use of contradictory ideas or thoughts is prevalent in both visual and performing arts. These semantic contradictions play a crucial role in challenging conventional expectations and fostering aesthetic engagement with the audience. They often add depth and complexity to aesthetic expressions, nurturing imagination and offering ample space for reflection and retrospection. The interplay of contradiction between literal and implied meanings creates a dynamic and engaging experience for the audience. In theatrical performances, characters often deliver lines that convey conflicting ideas and thoughts. These semantic contradictions, where the literal meaning contradicts the implied meaning, serve as a tool to challenge the conventional associations typically found in openly anchored linguistic expressions. To illustrate the use of semantic contradiction in verbal expression, a *Thottampātu* is analysed.

ഭക്തിയില്ലെന്നിരിക്കിലും

ഭക്തനെന്നു കരുതി
മുക്തി നൽകീട്ടടിയനെയെന്നും
കൃപയാൽ തമ്പുരാനെ

(Peethambaran, 2017, p. 89)

Even without devotion (Though there is no piety,)
I thought I was a devotee (by considering me as a pious person)
Provide me salvation, O dear Lord,
by your grace

The *thottam* reflects a heartfelt plea for salvation. The speaker acknowledges their own imperfections and places their unwavering faith in the benevolence of the deity. Through the *thottam*, the speaker expresses a deep yearning for spiritual guidance and maintains a hopeful belief that the deity's blessing will ultimately lead to salvation. The speaker's fervent prayer and intense desire to be in the deity's presence reflect their sincere plea, emanating directly from the speaker's heart. The speaker firmly believes that salvation can be obtained through the grace of the deity, transcending the limitations of their imperfect nature. The longing for spiritual upliftment and blessing from the divine is evident in this expression. It highlights the speaker's profound desire for a higher spiritual connection and their hope for divine intervention. However, the *thottam* begins by acknowledging a lack of devotion or religious virtue within the speaker. The expression "even without devotion" implies there is a lack of devotion or a belief within the speaker. Even without devotion, the speaker thought he was a devotee. This was a mistake on the part of the speaker to consider himself a devotee without any devotion. He acknowledges this mistake and seeks the blessings of the deity. Therefore, he now requests the deity to provide salvation. The same expression can also be seen as; despite acknowledging the absence of pity within the speaker, the speaker humbly requests the deity to consider the speaker as a pious individual. The expression "by considering me as a pious person" suggests that the speaker wants to be perceived as pious or wants others to view them as pious. At the literal level, this is a plea for salvation. However, a paradox arises from the contradiction between the speaker's denial of the existence of piety within the speaker and the desire to be seen as pious. It seems

inconsistent to assert that piety does not exist and yet seeks to be recognized as a pious individual.

A paradox can be interpreted in different ways, depending on the context or intention behind the expression. Here, the expression “though there is no piety” reflects a sense of humility and self-awareness regarding one’s own shortcomings. It can also be taken as a reflection of a personal struggle or a contradiction within one’s beliefs. It reflects the speaker’s inner conflict. Literally, the paradox can be seen as a mistake on the speaker’s part to consider themselves as a devotee due to external expectations or social pressures. They later release this mistake and seek the deity’s blessing to get rid themselves of such thoughts. However, here the paradox serves as a suggestor. By presenting an apparent contradiction, the writer aims to engage the audience and encourage them to question the nature of piety. Even though the speaker acknowledges the absence of piety or righteousness literally, the implied meaning suggests that they are on the right path. The context will reveal that the piety that they used in the literary expression is the one established by social conventions. By acknowledging his own shortcomings, the speaker seeks redemption and liberation from struggles and challenges. The humble plea to the deity for salvation and grace, despite acknowledging a lack of inherent piety, reveals the speaker’s genuine longing for assistance, blessings, and guidance. It is not merely an acknowledgement of limitation but a sincere request that stems from the depths of the speaker’s heart. There is a semantic contradiction between the literal and implied meanings in this *thottam*. However, the semantic contradiction in *thottam* can be resolved by identifying the suggested meanings.

The Dance of Contradiction: Exploring the Power of Paradox in Ethnic Performances

Just as in verbal expressions, visual expressions also involve the use of ideas or concepts that appear contradictory on the surface but are resolved upon reflection. Contradictory ideas or thoughts are purposefully employed in visual and performing arts to evoke emotional responses and challenge traditional perceptions. Resolving an apparent contradiction often involves finding the suggested meaning and connecting it with contextual cues. By introducing conflicting ideas and contradictions, performers aim to disrupt the established patterns and invite the audience to delve deeper into the layers of meaning embedded within the performance. This approach serves as a means to evoke emotions or convey specific meanings to intrigue and provoke introspection.

For instance, in a performance that explores the theme of love and betrayal, the protagonist passionately declares their love for one another while, in the next scene, they engage in a secret affair behind their partners' backs. This intentional contradiction challenges the audience's expectations of love being faithful, inviting them to question the complexities and contradictions inherent in human relationships. The same sequence can be portrayed explicitly or implicitly. Through the juxtaposition of contradictory elements, performers can create a range of emotional responses, from surprise to fury or fear to devotion. The example given below illustrates how semantic contradiction is utilised with an ethnic performance to create complexity and enhance aesthetic beauty.

Guḷikan Tiṟa is a popular ritual art performance that is performed in temples and sacred groves where Guḷikan is worshipped. The popular myth surrounding Guḷikan states that he was born from the left toe of Lord Shiva. When Kālan was killed, there were no deaths in the world. Subsequently, Mother Earth complained to other gods about the increased burden she had to bear. Guḷikan was created as a solution to restore the balance of the time cycle disrupted by the absence of Kālan. Lord Shiva sent Guḷikan to earth to carry out the actions of Kālan. Worshipers firmly believe that Guḷikan's gaze and movement are omnipresent. In some places, Guḷikan Tiṟa performances include minor characters like Kallichi and Kaliyan. In these short acts, Kallichi goes through various stages of love, marriage, and pregnancy culminating in the birth of a child. It symbolises a woman's life balanced between pleasures and sorrows. An important sequence in the Guḷikan Tiṟa involves the interaction between Guḷikan and Kallichi. Right from the beginning of the performance, Kallichi seeks blessings from Guḷikan upon seeing him. The first part of the play is humorous, with the scenes of Kallichi attempting to seduce other men from the audience and teasing them by claiming they are the father of her child in the womb. Using a rope, the span of her pregnancy is humorously calculated. This sequence in Guḷikan Tiṟa induces laughter. After Kallichi gives birth to her child, she entrusts the child to Guḷikan for temporary care. A fearsome fight takes place as Guḷikan attempts to take the life of the child. This apparent contradiction between the explicit actions and the inherent nature of Guḷikan, as suggested in the previous cases, can be resolved by considering contextual cues. Guḷikan is considered the god who takes away the life of living beings during the time of death. Guḷikan took off the weight of the earth by taking lives away. It is believed that the presence of Guḷikan can be found in all

human deeds from birth to death. In this act, the use of semantic contradiction serves as a powerful tool to evoke emotions and convey specific meanings. The apparent contradiction within the act lies in contrast between the cheerful portrayal of Guḷikan in the initial acts and the subsequent fearsome fight of Guḷikan to take the life of a child. While the previous acts present a humorous episode, the contradiction arises when Guḷikan, who is initially depicted as a benevolent deity, is portrayed as a deity responsible for taking the life of the child. However, this contradiction can be resolved by recognising the dual nature of Guḷikan. He embodies the role of both preserving life and being responsible for the cessation of life. Guḷikan balances the cycle of life and death, relieving the burden of the earth by taking lives away. By considering the contextual cues, the contradictory actions can be reconciled, revealing the multifaceted nature of Guḷikan within the performance.

Ethnic performances are rooted in rich cultural traditions that represent the practices and customs of specific ethnic groups or communities. What distinguishes ethnic performances from other forms of art is their root and connection to a specific cultural context. Exploring ethnic performances helps us to delve into the vibrant and diverse world of cultural expressions. Some myths about the history of Sarppaṁtuḷḷal go as follows. In a wildfire, many living organisms of the Khandavanam perished. One snake with a half-burnt body approached a woman who was drawing water from a well. Upon seeing the snake's charred body, she felt pity and offered it some water. Out of fear, the snake hid inside the pot. The woman placed the pot near a tulsi plant. Over time, a snake burrow formed in that very spot. Upon witnessing this, the other elders in the family became angry and expelled the woman from the house. Even a servant who supported her was also cast out. The snake emerged and blessed her by saying, "As you rescued me through your pot, you will find sustenance through this very same pot as well". The woman who saved the snake later became the ancestor of the Pulluva community, who lived by singing the songs of serpents. Sarppaṁtuḷḷal is the most significant ritual performed as a part of serpent worship in Kerala. Young girls observe fourteen days of fasting to carry out this ritual. Prior to commencing Sarppaṁtuḷḷal, the construction of Maṇippaṇtal is the first and important step in this process. The preparations for building the Maṇippaṇtal begin in the afternoon of the first day of the performance. The Maṇippaṇtal is constructed to resemble the Kandava forest, and thus, the decorations of the Maṇippaṇtal are in sync with this theme. Additionally, tender coconut, and

areca nuts, symbolising the fruits of the forest, are also hung as part of the decorations. An example of semantic contradiction in Sarppaṁtuḷḷal is in the transformation of human performers into snakes. Despite being human beings, the artists assume the role of serpent goddesses, embodying their characteristics while retaining their human form. The juxtaposition of divine serpents and human aspects within the same individual blurs the boundaries between reality and divinity. The semantic contradiction in Sarppaṁtuḷḷal offers a mystical and transformative experience for both the performers and the audience, providing a unique perspective on spirituality. During the performance, young girls immersed in the rhythmic chants of the Nāgapātu traverse and crawl across the *kaḷam*. As they enter a heightened state of frenzy, their bodies convulse and writhe, mirroring the movements of a snake. However, with respect to the performance, Maṇippaṇṭal represents the Kandava forest, and the actions of the girls are in sync with the movements of the snakes in an anxious state. The forceful physical movements showcase their intense energy to escape from the wildfire. Absorbed in the Nāgapātu, the girls energetically crawl across the *kaḷam*. Using the leaves of arecanut, they drench their bodies with a liquid known as guruti, a concotion of turmeric and lime. Without this narrative in the background, the actions of the girls are taken as a manifestation of intense energy and spiritual connection within the divine serpents. The dynamic movements of the girls with the *kaḷam* resemble the actions of an intensely active or "insane" individual. To remove this semantic contradiction, one has to see Maṇippaṇṭal as the Khandava forest and the girls as the snake residing there, trying to escape from the wildfire. Once the suggested meaning is clear, it will be aesthetically pleasing to watch the girls crawling and climbing like snakes, evoking a sense of fear.

Harmony of Dissonance: The Impact of Semantic Contradictions in Aesthetic Expressions

Semantic contradiction challenges established patterns of thoughts and perceptions, encouraging the audience to question preconceived notions and assumptions. By disrupting these patterns, performers create a space for the audience to engage actively with the performance. The deliberate use of semantic contradiction invites the audience to interpret and reflect upon the contrasting ideas presented in the performance. This can lead to a deeper understanding of the themes of the performance and its messages. In visual arts, the use of colour, texture and composition can convey deeper meanings that may not be immediately apparent from the literal

interpretation of the work. Semantic contradiction can occur when the subject matter conflicts with the style or medium. For example, a painting that depicts a violent or disturbing subject matter may be painted with light colours. In music, semantic conflict can arise when the lyrics of a song conflict with the melody or rhythm. This shows that in aesthetic expressions, such as poetry, music and painting, there is often a deliberate use of language that creates an antagonistic relationship between the literal and implied meanings. This challenges the viewer's expectations and can provoke deeper thoughts and reflections. Semantic contradictions can create depth, complexity and emotional impact. By creating tension or conflict between the literal and implied meanings of words, phrases, or images, artists engage their audience and create a more meaningful and memorable aesthetic experience. In aesthetic expressions that share an antagonistic relationship between the literal and implied meanings, semantic conflict can arise between the literal and implied meanings. In aesthetic expressions with suggestions, the conflicting situation or concepts that appear at first to be contradictory or impossible can be resolved upon further reflection due to the discovery of an underlying level of reason or meaning. In certain cases, the semantic contradiction between literal and implied meanings can be resolved by deciphering the intention of the poet or the speaker or by identifying the suggestive potential of words and meaning and linking it with contextual cues. The resolution of the semantic conflict lies within the use of either linguistic or pragmatic strategies. One way to resolve the semantic contradiction is through the use of linguistic strategies. The use of metaphor and simile helps to clarify the implied meaning and bring it into alignment with the literal meaning. In certain literary expressions, the suggested meanings are shaped and modulated by cultural and pragmatic elements. Another way to resolve the conflict is through pragmatic strategies, which involves considering the speaker's intention, the audience's expectations, and the social and cultural framework shaping the context of communication. Either way, the apparent contradiction can be resolved. Though suggestion provides creatively nuanced artistic ways of expressing meaning in a literary work, its apprehension and appreciation are realised when circumstances, such as cultural context and pragmatic elements, combine to convey it. Otherwise, it may not be apprehended.

Chapter 5

The Art of Literary Translation and Adaptation

A literary work cannot be permanently confined to a single language; it transcends language barriers and travels to diverse regions. Whether it is a literary work, music, or movie, it garners appreciation from people all over the world. These appreciations surpass language barriers and reach other lands through translations. In a world where a misplaced comma can turn one's fortune wheel, translation is a sail close to the wind. Even so, paying attention to the constraints on translation and understanding the parameters of its wind and climatic conditions can smooth the sail and contribute to its aesthetics and workability, and in time to come, improved machine translations. Translation, in general terms, is a rendition of the meaning or content of expressions from one language or one (communication) system to another; creative, accurate, and functional in good ones and not so or weakly so in the opposite (Kelly, 1979; Malmkjær, 2012; Venuti, 2000). However, performing arts encompass elements beyond verbal expressions, such as body movement and music, which cannot be strictly translated in the same manner as a written text is translated. In the context of performing arts, adaptation refers to the modification or reinterpretation of a work to suit different cultural, artistic, and contextual settings. While specific dialogue or lyrics are translated within a performance, the overall process of transforming a work to be performed on stage or in terms of live entertainment is generally referred to as adaptation (Hutcheon, 2012).

At one end of the spectrum of human translation, there are source texts in mathematical, logical, or scientific languages, whereas, on the other end, the texts are in natural languages having expressions with suggested meanings. In some cases, for example, in transposing mathematical or factual information expressed in one language to another, a plain literal translation of expressions may be sufficient. Translation in most of these cases could be smooth and plain sailing, for what it needs to preserve in the transition is the form or structure[30] of expressions

[30] Since form or structure guarantees the truth of mathematical expressions, form preservation is the only requirement in the case of translation of these expressions. For example, any translation (#>@, #, therefore @) that preserves the form of the following expression (p>q, p, therefore q) would be truth-preserving as well, and so would count as a good translation of the given expression. For an account of how these non-content-specific expressions

only. Translation of literary works, on the other end, takes a different path; here, neither literal translation of forms of expressions nor content alone is sufficient. Capturing or *recovering* the network of words along with their meaning in a literary work and *discovering* or rendering them in another language requires additional considerations. (Ingarden, 1973). This chapter argues that these considerations include phonic elements and shows that the suggestive potential of words (*dhvani*) in a literary work creates semantic and aesthetic constraints, if unsatisfied with target expressions, can impede translation and, in turn, offers how paying heed to these constraints can aid translation. This chapter analyses literary expressions with *śleṣa* (double entendre), where the figures of speech get directly expressed and contrast them using literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani,* (phonic-based suggestion), where the suggestive power of words implies a figure of speech. This chapter argues that for the literary expressions with *śleṣa* as the figure of speech is directly expressed in the target expression, the literal translation of the homonym as two separate words in the target expression will not produce any ambiguity in the target expression due to the direct appearance of a second figure. On the other hand, for literary expressions where the figures of speech are suggested in the source expression, as in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the literal translation of the literary expressions using paraphrasing or individually mentioning both meanings of the homonym will lead to ambiguity in the target expression, as the second meaning is non-contextual. However, with examples illustrating successful attempts to translate literary expressions with *śleṣa* and *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, this chapter shows how paying heed to various linguistic constraints can aid literary translation. In line with this, the second section of the chapter argues that the process of adapting ethnic performances into different forms poses even greater challenges. Ethnic performances such as Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal are intricately connected to sacred groves, and their removal from their original surroundings not only impact the visual appeal of the performance but also have indirect consequences for their natural habitat.

Translation and Linguistic Clogging

Linguistic clogging, as introduced and argued for in this chapter, is a case of interpretive condition present in literary expressions with homonyms where the literal and suggested

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are computed in classical AI and how content-specific expressions are computed in human cognitive systems and contemporary AI models, see Shea (2021).

meaning of expressions are entirely different and take different inferential and narrative trajectories though connected through the vehicle(s). Linguistic clogging can happen at three levels; where the reader is not alert to both the meanings of the homonym, where the reader glides away from *recovering* the figure of speech, and where the translator understands the meanings but does not find words with similar *lexical drift* in the target expression. At the third level, linguistic clogging reaches its challenging form in disrupting the poetic suggestion of literary expression. Even if the linguistic constraint is satisfied by paraphrasing[31], that is, compensated otherwise using literal expressions in the translation, the aesthetic beauty cannot be maintained as such in literal translations. Poetic devices like double entendre, paronomasia, and onomatopoeia, though found in the language of everyday life, add a different texture to literary expressions. In literary expressions, figures of speech can be directly expressed or implied by the suggestive power of words. In this chapter, Ānandavardhana's theory of suggestion is used to explain linguistic clogging in phonology-based literary expressions. In the case of phonology-based literary expressions like *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, there could be a lack of equivalent words in the target language resulting in linguistic clogging.

Linguistic Constraints in Translating *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*

In literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the literal meaning stands independent of the suggested meaning and is complete by itself. An array of suggestions apart from the literal meaning may arise because of the suggestive power of the homonym in such literary expressions. As the literal and suggested meanings of expressions encoded within the same sound are entirely different, some readers might miss the suggested meaning or overlook them. If the reader captures the literal and suggested meanings and discovers the figure of speech suggested by the word, then there is no linguistic clogging. Here the suggestive potential of words becomes a desirable feature that heightens the aesthetic beauty of the literal expression (See, Fig 1). Linguistic clogging becomes an undesirable feature of the expressions for those who miss capturing the suggested meaning. Linguistic clogging can happen at the following three levels.

[31] Currie & Frascaroli (2021) have given a different account on the possibility of paraphrasing in poetry. However, the present author does not endorse it considering the arguments of and notions of meaning in this paper.

(1) The first stage of linguistic clogging happens when readers are not alert to both the meanings of the homonym. In such cases, the reader is unaware of linguistic clogging and focuses on the literal meaning. The suggested meaning is invisible here.
(2) In the second stage, readers identify both meanings, yet they miss the relation between them and fail to discover the figure of speech. Here, the reader is aware of linguistic clogging but does not give the necessary attention needed to interpret the suggested meaning.
(3) The third stage happens in translation, where linguistic clogging reaches its peak in disrupting the poetic suggestion of the literary expression. The translator is aware of linguistic clogging present in target expressions. However, translation fails to capture the suggested meaning due to the lack of equivalent words for conveying both the expressed and suggested meanings in the target language.

Aesthetic Concerns about Translating śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani

In literary expressions with śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani, the figure of speech, rather than expressed directly through the denotative words, is being suggested. The author knits two seemingly unrelated objects (the long season of summer and Lord Shiva in the passage quoted below) using the poetic threads of suggestion in literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. In the translation of literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, it becomes necessary to either individually express the suggested meaning through denotation or to expose the figure of speech directly through words, as in the case of *śleṣa*. Literal translation and paraphrasing of expressions take away the possibility for suggestions in the translated literary expression. We often miss the poetic suggestion in a translated work because the suggested figure gets directly expressed or is omitted in the translated literary expression.

Three different translations of the Sanskrit passage, "*atrāntare kusuma-samaya-yugam upasaṃharann ajṛmbhata grīṣmābhidhānaḥ phulla-mallikā-dhavalāṭṭa-hāso mahā-kālaḥ*[32]" (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 78) are taken to demonstrate the point mentioned above.

English translation of the passage by Krishnamoorthy.

[32] (Source, GRETIL)

> In the meanwhile, appeared (also, yawned) the Terrible
> Time (also Lord Siva) of the name 'Summer' putting an
> end to the two flowering months (also, bringing an end of the
> aeons) and with radiant laughter in the farm of mansions
> festooned with blooming jasmines (also, with boisterous
> laughter white like full-blown jasmines)
>
> (Ānandavardhana, 1974, p. 79).

English translation of the passage by Ingalls, Masson, & Patwardhan.

> Meanwhile the long period named Summer,
> Meanwhile the God of Destruction,
> when the market stalls are white with the laughter
> whose terrible laughter is white
> of their blossoming jasmine flowers,
> as jasmine flowers,
> expanded as it put an end to the two months of Spring
> yawned as He put an end to the aeons of time
>
> (Ānandavardhana, 1990, p. 302).

Malayalam translation by C.V. Vasudeva Bhattathiri

> *itiniṭayil raṇṭu vasantamāsakālaṁ upasaṁ harīcca keāṇṭu kēāṭṭuvāyiṭṭu.*
> *vēnalkkālamennu pēruḷḷa viṭarnna mullappūvākunna peāṭṭi ciriyēāṭe vanna mahākālaṁ* (*śivan*)
>
> (Ānandavardhana, 2008, p. 73).

In all three translations, the contextual and non-contextual meanings are directly denoted. The translator uses various methods to portray both of these meanings. The non-contextual meaning is given either in separate brackets or in smaller font or italics to differentiate it from contextual meaning. When it is directly denoted through words in the translated literary expression, they

become part of the literal meaning. The literal meaning of such literary expression is conveyed through literal translation, whereas, owing to the linguistic constraints triggered by *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the suggested meaning is lost in translation. If the passage cannot suggest a non-contextual meaning after translation, then there is no chance for the reader to grasp the figure of speech in the translated literary expression. The suggested meaning is non-contextual, and it requires the imaginative ability of the reader to identify the suggested meaning. The author/translator keeps it open for the reader's imagination to explore the suggested figure of speech without directly expressing it. The relation between the two seemingly unrelated objects is what the reader *recovers* in their imagination. Therefore, it opens the possibility for interpretation from the reader's frame of mind. An active engagement of the reader is necessary for this process of *recovering* the relation between the contextual meaning and the non-contextual meaning. The reader gets that aesthetic pleasure by actively engaging in the creative process along with the author.

In literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, if a translator cannot employ equivalent expressions that can convey *both* the meanings encoded in the source expression, then translated literary expression misses the poetic suggestion. Consequently, readers cannot savour the suggested meaning as it is absent in the translated literary expression. Suppose the suggested meaning in a literary expression is translated through denotation instead of the non-contextual meaning. In that case, it does not form any relationship with the context and thus remains ambiguous. Thus, linguistic clogging arises at the suggested level in literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. Literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* can be translated at the literal level without any specific difficulty. If we look at the contextual meaning, the translated literary expression is meaningful and complete at the literal-half level. However, it cannot suggest the figure of speech in the translated literary expression. The lack of poetic suggestion in the target expression thus results in a half-baked translation. However, by paying close attention to these linguistic constraints can ensure the meaning and artistic qualities of the original work are faithfully conveyed in the target language.

***śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* with suggested fact**

While the explicit meaning is literally congruent, a fact or a figure that is different from the literal meaning can be suggested in literary expression with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*. In such literary expressions, the implied meaning will be revealed due to the suggestive potential of words. In order to effectively convey both the implied and explicit meanings of a literary expression and capture the nuances of suggested meaning from the source expression, equivalent homonyms need to be employed in the target expressions. In cases where there is no equivalent homonym available in the target language, translators employ various methods, such as paraphrasing or providing explanatory footnotes. However, for the translation of literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, a literal translation of the literary expression alone will not fulfil the purpose served by the homonym in the source expression. In literary expression with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the implied meaning diverges from the explicit meaning, and the suggested fact is not explicitly stated in the source expression. In such cases, literal translation either makes the implied meaning also explicit or fails to capture the intended effect. A literary expression in the Sanskrit language in which the implied meaning differs from the explicit meaning is quoted below.

> *paṃthia ṇa ettha sattharamatthi maṇaṃ pattharatthale gāme / uṇṇaapaoharaṃ pekhkhiūṇa jai vasasi tā vasasu // 58 //*
> "*pathika nātra prastaramasti manākprastarasthala grāma unnatapayēādharaṁ prēkṣya yadi vasasi tadavasa/*"

These are the words of a homemaker to a traveller who came home on a rainy evening. The literal meaning of the literary expression is as follows: "O traveller, this barren village has no lodge to stay, yet if you wish to stay here after seeing these rising clouds, please do so[33]. In this literary expression, the word "*payodhara*" is a homonym with two meanings: "bosoms" and "clouds". While the literal meaning of the literary expression is explicitly conveyed, an idea that is entirely different from the literal meaning is revealed due to the suggestive potential of words. If we interpret "*payodhara*" as "bosom", the literary expression suggests a meaning that diverges

[33] O traveller (*pathika*), this barren village (*manākprastarasthala grāma*) has no lodge to stay (*nātra prastaramasti*), yet seeing (*prēkṣya yadi*) these rising clouds (*unnata payēādharaṁ*), if you wish to stay here (*vasasi tadavasa*), please do so.

from the literal meaning of the expression. The suggested meaning of the literary expression is, O traveller, this barren village has no lodge to stay, yet if you wish to stay here after seeing my blooming bosoms, please do so. The suggested meaning implies that the traveller is invited to spend time with the lady[34]. In this literary expression, the literal meaning is explicit and congruent, while the suggested meaning is indirectly expressed. The aesthetic beauty lies in the fact that, while remaining literally congruent, the literary expression hints at another meaning without directly stating it. The implied meaning is conveyed through the suggestive potential of words. It is possible to convey both the implied and explicit meanings in the target expression by utilising the suggestive potential of words, just as in the source expression. Only by employing this suggestive function can the implied meaning be effectively conveyed in the target expression. If the suggestive potential of words is not explored in the target expression, the implied meaning either becomes directly expressed or remains absent in the target expression.

The English translation of the literary expression by Gangadar Jha,

> O traveller, in this village of stones, there is not a. bedding to be had; yet, seeing the rising clouds (*unnata payodhara*, my blossoming breasts), if you decide to lodge here, you may do so.

In this English translation of the literary expression, both meanings of the homonym "*payodhara*" are provided individually as “clouds” and “breasts”. In the source expression, the suggested meaning was not explicitly stated but rather implied. However, in the target expression, both the literal and the suggested meanings are literally given. Since the suggested meaning is also literally congruous, the target expression does not become ambiguous. However, when the suggested meaning is literally expressed, the implied fact in the source expression becomes directly expressed. Expressing something explicitly is different from expressing it implicitly. The second meaning is implied in the source expression and is not directly expressed. On the contrary, the target expression directly expresses that implied meaning. This takes away the beauty of the literary expression as the subtlety of meaning captured in the source expression

[34] O traveller (*pathika*), this barren village (*manākprastarasthala grāma*) has no lodge to stay (*nātra prastaramasti*), yet seeing (*prēkṣya yadi*) these rising bosoms (*unnata payēādharaṁ*), if you wish to stay here (*vasasi tadavasa*), please do so.

is lost in the target expression. However, it is possible to capture the suggested fact as an implied meaning by relying on the suggestive function even in the target expression. Instead of strictly adhering to the literal translation of the literary expression, translator Catlin takes a different approach.

> O traveller, this barren plateau has no inn.
> Feel the charged atmosphere!
> If you want to stay with me, then please do.
>
> (Tr. Catlin, 2006)

In the English translation of the literary expression, the phrase (*unnata payodharaṁ*) is modified as "charged atmosphere". Since the word "*payodharaṁ*" is a homonym with meanings "clouds" and "bosoms", *unnata payodharaṁ* can be individually translated as "rising clouds" or "blooming breasts" as we have seen in the translation by Gangader Jha. In order to capture the nuances of the suggested meaning from the source expression and simultaneously convey both the meanings of the expression, translator Catlin has opted for the term "charged atmosphere" in his translation. While it is not a literal translation of the expression, it carries a different semantic meaning from the source expression while successfully capturing the aesthetic beauty in the target expression and the meaning of the literary expression. With the use of the expression "charged atmosphere" in the target language, it means to "be charged emotionally and meteorologically". With this translation, both the literal meaning and implied meaning are successfully captured in the target expression. In certain instances, translators may find it necessary to provide additional details or contextual information in order to fully capture the literary expression in translation. This is especially true when there are world plays or suggested meanings involved. In the Malayalam translation of the aforementioned literary expression, the translator includes extra details to further enhance the understanding of the situation. These additional details assist the reader in quickly grasping the suggested meaning.

Malayalam translation of the verse by A R Rajaraja Varma.

> "*salkkāramēkānāyi pāntha kēḷkka talkkālaminṅnilla gṛhādhināthan payēādharattin̲re uyarcca pārttiṭṭī ādhiyeṅkil pulareggamikkāṁ*."'

The literal meaning of the literary expression is that for providing you with hospitality, the lord of the house is not here for the time being. If you are anxious by seeing the rising clouds, you can resume your journey in the morning[35]. The explicit meaning states that the lady is offering the traveller a safe space to stay, protecting him from the potential storm that might come at night. In both Sanskrit and Malayalam languages, the word "*payodhara*" means "clouds" and "bosoms". The suggested meaning in the translated literary expression is, listen, traveller, the lord of the house is not here for the time being. If the sight of rising bosoms had made you fall in love with me, then stay here at night and resume your journey in the morning[36]. Her desire for intimacy with the traveller is implied through the suggestive potential of words. The homonym "*payodhara*" in the source expression can also be used in the same manner in the target expression as it holds the same meanings in the target language. In the Malayalam translation, the homonym "*payodhara*" is maintained. Thus, the explicit and implicit meanings in the source expression can be maintained in the target expression. Both meanings of the homonym are not literally expressed in the target expression. However, with this translation approach, both the literal meaning and the implied meanings are captured in the target expression. Such creative interventions from the translator's side can be observed in every translation. Hence, translation is not simply a replication of the source expression in the target language. Translators have the liberty to make adjustments while translating a literary expression.

Translating Ethnic Songs: Navigating through Cultural Nuances and Linguistic Complexities

Linguistic constraints encompass not only the technical aspects of language but also the cultural and historical context in which the literary expression is situated. Translators need to be sensitive to the cultural nuances, metaphors, and other literary devices employed in the source text, as these elements play a crucial role in shaping the literary expression and its aesthetic impact.

[35] For providing you the hospitality (*salkkāramēkānāyi*) lord of the house (*gṛhādhināthan*) is not here for the time being (*talkkālamiṅṅilla*). If you are anxious by seeing (*pārttiṭṭī ādhiyeṅkil*) the rise of bosoms (*payēādharattin̲re uyarcca*), you can resume your journey in the morning (*pulareggamikkāṁ*).

[36] Listen traveller (*pāntha kēḷkka*), the lord of the house (*gṛhādhināthan*) is also not here for the time being (*talkkālamiṅṅilla*). If you are excited (*ādhiyeṅkil*) by seeing the rising bosoms (*payēādharattin̲re uyarcca pārttiṭṭī*), then stay here at night and resume your journey in the morning (*pulareggamikkāṁ*).

Translators must be capable of navigating these cultural constraints and making informed decisions to find creative solutions that can capture the essence of the original literary expression. Translating literary expressions involves balancing the linguistic integrity of the source expression and ensuring readability in the target language. The translations must be accessible and comprehensible to the target audience.

Translating ethnic songs requires an understanding of the cultural contexts, mythological references, and contextual strategies used in the source expression. The process of translating ethnic songs involves careful interpretation and linguistic expertise in both the source language and the target language. To capture the essence and emotions conveyed in the original songs while maintaining the linguistic integrity and cultural significance of the song is a tedious task. Translating ethnic songs presents unique challenges, particularly when finding equivalent words, phrases, imagery and expressions in the target language that can convey the same sentiments as in the source language. Maintaining the song's musicality, including its rhythm, rhyme, and metre, when shifting to another language is also a difficult exercise. Besides, ethnic performances are deeply rooted in specific cultural traditions, and their cultural significance can be challenging to convey accurately through translation. Translators often face the challenge of finding equivalent terms in different cultural contexts. It requires a strong apprehension for the cultural nuances and artistic elements embedded within those literary expressions. However, translations make these ethnic songs available to a wider audience while preserving their traditional roots and authenticity.

Invocation of Karumakan: Waves of Devotion and the Inner Turmoil

The use of literary devices, alliteration, assonance, simile, and metaphor are commonly found in *Thottampātu*. Additionally, although rare, the use of homonyms can also be seen, similar to the usage in *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* in *Thottampātu*. Below is a *thottam* with a suggested figure of speech due to the suggestive potential of the word.

സിന്ധു വിലുന്തിത്തള്ളി വരുന്നവൻ
തിരമാല പോലെ അന്തരം
തന്നിലന്തർഭവിച്ചൊരന്ധത തീർക്കുവാനായ്

ബന്ധുര ഗാത്രീലക്ഷ്മി വിളങ്ങിടുന്നുഴലിപ്പുറത്ത്
കാന്തി കലർന്ന കരുമകൻ പദപങ്കജം കൈതൊഴുന്നേൻ

(Peethambaran, 2017, 81)

He who flows through the Sindhu
like a wave my inner self (like a wave there is a gap)
to remove the darkness that had entered within me
At Uzhalipuram where the beautiful Gatrilakshmi is shining
I clasped my hands at the lotus-like feet of the radiant Karumakan

The literary expression is an invocatory literary expression dedicated to the deity called Karumakan. The deity is depicted as flowing through the river Sindhu. The speaker, in an effort to dispel the darkness that has entered within him, clasps his hands in a prayerful gesture at the lotus feet of Karumakan. The goddess Gatrilakshmi is also shining in the same place named Uzhalipuram. Seeking blessings from god to dispel the darkness that has engulfed him, the speaker folds his hands. The darkness represents his inner turmoil. The word "*antharam*" is a homonym, meaning "inner self" and "gap". The speaker's thoughts fluctuate like waves, suggesting that his inner self is inconsistent, constantly wavering with thoughts. The simile of "my inner self is like a wave" is expressed literally. Alternatively, if the second meaning is taken, it means that even though the darkness has engulfed him, there is still a gap. This gap is similar to the gap between the waves, indicating that the darkness has not completely consumed him. There is still room for divine intervention within that gap, which his devotion towards the god can represent. This devotion may come and go like a wave. It is not consistent. The *thottam* suggests a similarity between the gap in his mind and the waves. While the waves continue to fluctuate endlessly, the deity's blessings can bring stillness to his thoughts. He seeks divine intervention to remove the darkness that has entered him due to these fluctuating thoughts. The *thottam* portrays the speaker's profound faith and devotion towards the deity Karumakan.

Just like any literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, the *thottam* is also constrained by linguistic and aesthetic elements related to *śabda* or sound. When the target expression falls short in capturing the homonyms with its multiple interpretations, the intricate layer of meaning and the lasting impression it has left in the source expression are compromised in the translation.

When actualised through the creative use of phonic elements and lexical drift to encode meaning, the suggestive potential of words enhances the aesthetic attributes of an expression by alluding to a figure of speech. In translating such literary expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, we encounter linguistic clogging not in terms of primary meaning but due to the linguistic and aesthetic constraints in capturing the suggestive aspects. Generally, when words with similar phonic elements cannot be translated, the target expression shortfalls poetic suggestion (*dhvani*). Nevertheless, when the translation succeeds in capturing the parameters of sound (*śabda*), that is, the structural elements of the source expressions, along with the meaning, reference, and other semantic features, then the lyrical beauty and aesthetic attributes of the literary expression can be maintained even in the translation of literary expression with poetic suggestions. Once the explanatory link between the structural (phonic) elements of words and content, the causal connection between *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani* and lexical drift and meaning, is understood, it may be possible to put that for broader applications. In such a manner, understanding the importance of the phonic elements in human translation can be helpful in areas such as machine translation, where structural elements are registered and processed, capturing aspects of content.

The translation aims to convey the meaning or content of an expression from one language to another. An ethnic performance is not just about the verbal component; along with the verbal component, the visual component is equally important. However, recreating a performing art with visual and verbal components in a different medium is a complex and challenging endeavour that requires careful consideration and artistic skill. The adaptation of an ethnic performance goes beyond the linguistic hurdles. It is a multi-faceted process that requires a comprehensive understanding of the cultural, linguistic, artistic, and aesthetic aspects of conveying the original performance's essence. Finding a delicate balance between honouring the source culture and art form while allowing for meaningful engagement and appreciation from diverse audiences in new contexts is tedious. Yet, it provides a unique opportunity for the artist to bring novel perspectives and creativity to the original form, adding new layers of meaning and expression. An adaptation of a performance can be both creative and a replica of the original.

Creative Adaptation vs Replicated Adaptations

Creative adaptation refers to the process of taking an existing work and modifying it to place them in a different medium or form, creating new expressions from the existing ones. It involves the reinterpretation and transformation of the original form to create new works inspired by, but not limited to, the original work. In contrast, a replicated adaptation involves replicating an existing art form in a new space without significantly altering its original form. The original form is reproduced or reproduced through replicated adaptations. Replicated adaptations are often made for various reasons, such as preserving or reproducing the original art form for different audiences or situations. The purpose is to reproduce the same artistic experience and impact as the original work. Hence, replicated adaptations do not involve significant modifications or reinterpretations of the original form. They present the replicated version without introducing substantial changes to the artistic vision.

Novelty through visual expressions

Novelty can be introduced through the difference in suggestor (*vyañjaka*), suggested meaning (*vyaṅgyārtham*), and difference in place and time. In any form of art, whether it is literature, music, or dance, newer forms are always emerging. Though many ethnic art forms have faded away over time, it is appreciable that Sarppaṁtuḷḷal is reviving from the brink of extinction. Ethnic art forms are very much different from modern art forms. Occasional changes are not as common in Sarppaṁtuḷḷal as in modern art forms. One reason for this is the adherence to established techniques and subject matter passed down through generations. It has limited scope for embracing new techniques and subject matter. On the other hand, performers of Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ adapt to evolving cultural, technological, and social contexts. Performative freedom in Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ allows for greater experimentation, flexibility, and diversity in Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ compared to Sarppaṁtuḷḷal. One main reason for this is the availability of diverse characters within the performance, which are not bound to any particular time or place. For example, characters like Kuṭṭiccāttan, Guru, and Kallichi are very fluid. It is easier to present a new narrative with them as characters. They are not restricted by any cultural ties. However, based on these characters, several creative adaptations can be made. For example, a dance composition named Sarpatatwam or The Serpent Wisdom, choreographed and performed by Methil Devika, a renowned Mohiniyattam artist, is inspired by performances like Sarppaṁtuḷḷal. Devika skillfully depicts the captivating allure and mystique of serpents through her dance. Through this choreography, she

uses expressive movements, gestures, and facial expressions unique to Mohiyattam to convey the serpentine charm and elegance by bringing forth the graceful and enchanting qualities associated with serpents. Similar to Sarppaṁtuḷḷal, the erasing of the *kaḷam* is found in this choreography. However, grace and elegance is more in Sarpatatwam, whereas it is more violent in Sarppaṁtuḷḷal. Devika's performance captures the fluidity of the serpents; its sensuality and mysterious nature captivate the audience. The movements of the serpents as it gracefully glides through the *kaḷam* are captivating and capture the audience's attention. Similar to Sarppaṁtuḷḷal, the act of erasing the *kaḷam* serve as a metaphorical representation of creation and dissolution, echoing the constant change observed in the natural world. Through this gesture, Devika adds meaning to her performance, inviting the audience to reflect on the fleeting nature of time and beauty. Such creative adaptations based on Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ can be seen. However, inspired by ethnic performances, various narratives can be presented. For example, Vimal Chandran's SciFi series are connected to ethnic performances such as Theyyam. His artworks try to reimagine characters from folklore, myths and native traditions into Science fiction environments. Replicated adaptations of Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ performances into modern stages may have back clashes.

Ethnic performances like Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal are traditionally performed in sacred groves. They share an intricate connection with the sacred groves, forming an inseparable bond between the performance and its natural environment. In recent times, performers have begun exploring the possibility of presenting ethnic performances, such as Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ, on modern stages. Adapting an ethnic performance to different venues or cultural settings may require modifications to ensure the performance resonates with the new audience while maintaining its cultural heritage. Elements such as stage, set design, costumes, and choreography, which were initially designed for a specific performance setting, such as sacred groves, need to be adapted to fit the constraints and possibilities of the new medium. The replicated adaptation of the ethnic performance often removes the performance from its original setting. But in reality, ethnic performances rely heavily on the unique ambience of the sacred groves. Simply taking an ethnic performance as it is and placing them on a modern stage without recreating the associated cultural context diminishes the aesthetic and cultural significance of the performance. As a result, replicated adaptations of Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and similar performances often fail to capture their aesthetic purpose. Performing an ethnic art form without creating a performance yard in a

suitable space, or meeting the technical requirements, can lead to disappointment for the audience. On a modern stage, these performers may appear as mere representations, lacking the connection and engagement with the audience essential to an ethnic performance.

There is a strong interconnection between the performance and the sacred groves, as they mutually sustain each other. Any changes or alterations in one significantly impact the other. This connection is inseparable, akin to the relationship between *śabda* (sound) and *artha* (meaning), where they are interdependent. In the absence of one, the other ceases to exist. The diverse practices associated with the ethnic performances contribute to preserving sacred groves, the ultimate haven of biodiversity. The role of aesthetic sensibility and imagination is paramount in conserving nature, achieved through preserving and disseminating lore and legends connected with sacred groves. These lores and legends associated with ritual performances hold immense significance in curtailing the encroachment of sacred groves

ഒന്നുമേവേണ്ട വെറ്റിലയും പണവുമെനിക്കുമിപ്പോൾ
തന്നിടേണം തുലാമുറ്റത്തുള്ള വെള്ളിക്കരിമ്പനയെ
ഇന്നുവെട്ടി മുറിപ്പതിന്നായ് ഭവാൻ പോന്നിട വേണം
തന്നിടേണം ഭവാനതിന്നായനുജ്ഞ നൽകീടവേണം
ഉന്നതമായ വെള്ളിക്കരിമ്പനയെ വെട്ടുന്ന നേരം
തെന്നിയാൾ വന്നുരച്ചുനീ വെട്ടല്ലേ കരിമ്പനയെ
ഇന്നതിൽ നാഗഭ്രത ഭഗവതിയായുഴലിപ്പുറത്ത്
ചെന്നു വസിച്ചിടുന്ന കരുമകൻ കഴൽ കൈതൊഴുന്നേൻ

(Peethambaran, 2017, 83)

I don't need anything, neither betel leaves nor money now
Give me the dark silver palm of the yard
You please come today to cut it off
Grant us, Give us your divine command
When it is time to prune the tall, dark silver palm
He came swayed and said - do not cut the dark silver palm
Within it resides the divine goddess of the serpents at Uzhalipuram
Holding my palm for the lord who lives in Uzhalipuram

The *thottam* highlights the divine presence within nature and emphasises the importance of respecting and preserving sacred groves. The *thottam* portrays an individual who yearns for a dark silver palm in the yard. They assert that they no longer desire any other possessions, such as betel leaves or money. His sole focus is obtaining the dark silver tree. However, when the time comes to prune the tall, dark silver palm. He came swaying and advised them not to cut down the trees. The divine intervention is due to a serpent goddess residing within the tree at Uzhalipuram. The *thottam* begins with a request from the person to give the dark silver palm in their yard. They reject Betel leaves and money, stating that they need nothing else. However, his desire for the dark silver palm is revealed. Others suggest that the person should come and cut down the tree on that day. When the time comes for the tall tree to be pruned, the lord appears and advises against cutting it, citing the presence of the divine goddess of serpents residing within the tree at Uzhalipuram. The *thottam* concludes by expressing the person's desire and devotion towards the lord, offering his folded palms. These lores and legends hold the potential to raise awareness about the ecological importance of these groves and the need to protect them from human activities such as deforestation and urbanisation. By fostering an appreciation for these spaces' beauty and spiritual significance and instilling a sense of collective responsibility, these lores and legends contribute to curbing the encroachment upon these invaluable ecosystems.

Breaking the balance

As society evolves, its reflection is seen in ethnic performances as well. The changes in the performances which have once nurtured these sacred groves have affected them badly in recent times. Earlier, these performances took place in the warm glow of firewood and *chootu*. However, they have been replaced by electric lights, which diminish the aesthetic beauty of the performances. These sacred groves have been transformed into modern temple complexes to accommodate bigger structural temples with the least aesthetic sensibility. The expansion of temple complexes and the celebration of festivals with grand programmes pose major threats to these sacred groves. The construction of barricades and *nadapanthal* using steel and iron rods disrupts the sanctity of the pristine groves. Additionally, the cutting down of trees for temple-related activities itself causes significant harm to the natural environment. Tarred roads have also replaced the stone pavements in many sacred groves. Ethnic performances, which have

played a major role in protecting and preserving sacred groves, have been negatively affected by the recent changes in the performance and the associated objects used for the performance. Through thoughtful and respectful adaptation, ethnic performance can continue to inspire, educate, and bridge cultural gaps, fostering a greater understanding and appreciation of our shared human experiences.

Chapter 6

Novelty in Performance

Human beings have the capacity to symbolise things. An artwork is a symbolic expression of thoughts, emotions, and feelings. Besides, it is the capacity of human beings to improvise a piece of art. While some non-human species may create "artistic" works, they may not improvise them. To mention, bees construct complex and magnificent hives. Even so, there is no *visible* variation in the design of hives as they are not products of creative minds. The beehive primarily serves as a shelter and storehouse for honey. Based on necessity and requirements, non-human species create objects and signals, some of which are visually or orally pleasing. However, such artistic works produced by non-human species tend to be repetitive in nature. In contrast, human beings have the ability to transform even a point or a line into genuine works of art through improvisations. Even these minimal expressions outstep the perceptible contents of a line or a point. Artistic expressions by human beings began to appear on the walls of caves just before the period that marked the arrival of modern humans in the evolutionary cycle. Since then, cave art, mural paintings, oral songs, and folk performances have marked the chronicle of human civilisation.

Literary characters can be metamorphosed into newer versions of themselves. In some cases, characters are represented as mere reflections of the original without any independent existence. However, these characters are often portrayed from diverse perspectives and are recreated as distinct entities, maintaining a life of their own. When characters from existing narratives are portrayed through various forms of art, they undergo a profound transformation and can have a whole new life. As literary characters evolve out of the literary expressions, they can also be interpreted differently. This process not only brings novelty to the characters and revitalises the literary works they originate from. In the first section of Udyota IV, Ānandavardhana explains how literary expressions can take on a new form, even if the poet works with the same ideas as earlier poets. Building on this, the chapter examines how a popular myth can be incorporated

into a work of art while still maintaining a fresh and new appearance. This chapter also analyses certain literary expressions from *Dhvanyāloka* relevant to understanding the concept of novelty in a work of art.

Navigating the Map of Suggestions: A Creative Journey

Adaptation or recreation can result in a wide variety of artistic works, such as a movie adaptation of a book, a dance composition based on poetry, or a painting based on lyrics. Throughout history, mythological narratives have been a rich source of inspiration for artists. By reinterpreting and adapting these narratives, authors give new life to them and explore contemporary themes and ideas. This process of transforming familiar and popular content into something new can be observed in various art forms, including poetry, dance, music, and movies. Some artists draw inspiration from mythological themes to create stories that resonate with modern audiences, while others adapt myths to a contemporary setting.

Mythical characters, though bound by social and cultural ties, mythical characters have resurrected across various cultures even after centuries through literary works. In Indian mythology, a mythical character called Kuṭṭiccāttan is familiar to the people of Kerala through indigenous rituals, yet they capture the character through different narratives. This chapter analyses the character of Kuṭṭiccāttan and sees how the character is portrayed and presented through various performative, literary, and ritualistic traditions across Kerala. The first section analyses various literary expressions with a backdrop of age-old stories to examine how they have incorporated novelty into a work of art. The second part of this chapter analyses the character of Kuṭṭiccāttan and finds out how the character is portrayed and presented through various performative, literary, and ritualistic traditions across Kerala. The final part of this chapter analyses certain creative adaptations of mythological characters and discusses the different ways adopted by Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ performers to bring novelty to a performance.

Novelty in Fictional Characters

Ohm hrim Kuttichatha… an expression that is heard across Kerala, is capable of stirring childhood memories for many people. Kuṭṭiccāttan is an illusionary character familiar to the people of Kerala, yet they capture the character through different narratives. Kuṭṭiccāttan is

presented in various forms as a saviour, a troublemaker, a god, a friend, and a destroyer. He is also known by many names, such as Kuṭṭiccāttan, Krishnankuṭṭiccāttan, Chāttansvāmi, Viṣṇumāya chāttan, Śāstāv, and Pōttin purattu chāttan.

In northern Kerala, Kuṭṭiccāttan is worshipped, idolised, and divine status is attributed to him. Even though he is brought to the form of an idol, through ethnic performances like Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Teyyam, he comes alive to reflect upon the untold narratives that were kept aside for many years. Teyyam and Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ usually depict characters who have fought against social injustices and are granted divine status. Kuṭṭiccāttan also tries to question the many traditional norms, and what makes this character heroic is his acts of resistance towards the existing power structure and the maintenance of an egalitarian society. However, minor variations can be found in the depiction of Kuṭṭiccāttan in ethnic performances. The Kuṭṭiccāttan Tiṟa is different from the Kuṭṭiccāttan theyyam performed in Kannur district.

In central Kerala, especially in the Thrissur district, Kuṭṭiccāttan is worshipped as the main deity in temples. He is worshipped as Viṣṇumāya, son of Siva and Parvati (in the form of Koolivaka). In Peringottukara Devasthanam Vishnumaya Bhuvaneswari temple, Kathakali offerings depicting the stories of Viṣṇumāya are dedicated to the god during Pournami and Amavasi days. In some myths, he is considered a *mantramoorthi*. Kuṭṭiccāttan appears as *sevamoorthi,* a form that can be controlled through *mantras*. Here, Kuṭṭiccāttan is seen as submissive to the *Mantravadi*. Fictional characters are born out of literary and artistic expressions, with some vanishing soon and others living for ages. The myths surrounding Kuṭṭiccāttan resonate with the deeds of a heroic man from the marginalised section who ferociously battled against the caste hierarchies. It is also the story of a man who faced exclusion due to his birth to a lower-caste mother. These narratives unveil hidden histories and open up the stories of caste discrimination that prevailed in our society. Kuṭṭiccāttan Tiṟa goes beyond mere worship; it also exposes a way of life that was hidden behind. It offers an opportunity to reflect upon the cultural activities, social interactions, religious notions, social structure, and traditions that shape our society. These myths also bring the history and socio-cultural experiences of the marginalised community into the limelight. Kuṭṭiccāttan was compelled to rebel against societal norms as they restricted his freedom because of his lower caste status. On numerous occasions, Kuṭṭiccāttan has raised his voice against injustice. For instance, when the milkmaid refused to provide milk to the newborn

baby after considering his caste, she was punished by Kuṭṭiccāttan. When the teacher revealed his casteist biases through his actions, Kuṭṭiccāttan taught him a lesson. He breaks his cane which symbolises power, and destroys his caste-dominated education centre. The act of burning the institution and eliminating the master stemmed from the recognition that these establishments perpetuated the caste structure. He also assists Kunkan, who was denied the right to offer an umbrella to the temple. He had revolted against the caste structure and power politics that denied equality. Kuṭṭiccāttan is depicted as the one from the marginalised section who fought for their rights and stood against injustices. However, these acts of resistance, which challenged social inequalities, found no place in any historical texts.

Besides these ritualistic traditions, Kuṭṭiccāttan appears before us through various literary forms such as dramas, serials, films, cartoons, and comic strips. Most of these forms present us with a character who is mystical, magical, and supernatural. Because of the fantasy elements, the character became very popular among children. With the introduction of these literary narratives, Kuṭṭiccāttan is presented as a mischievous demon who likes to prank people but does not cause serious harm. The comic strip called *Mayavi,* which was first published in 1984, gained popularity and acceptance from a wider audience. My dear Kuttichathan is a Malayalam fantasy film that was released in the same year. Hello Kuttichathan is a Malayalam TV series that aired on Asianet in 2008-2009. Hello Kuttichathan is a show about four kids, Kuttichathan and a witch. Kuttichathan helps the children solve various problems, and in return, the children try to save the chathan from the witch. This show was very entertaining and suitable for children.

A considerable shift in the character of Kuṭṭiccāttan happened after the introduction of the fictional tale *Mayavi* and the release of the movie *My dear Kuttichathan* in 1984. Children accepted the character and the phrase *Ohm hrim Kuttichatha* very fondly. In the movie, Kuṭṭiccāttan is portrayed as a friendly companion to children, even though he is said to be a formless creature or someone who is capable of taking any form. A small kid takes the role of Kuṭṭiccāttan throughout the movie. The appealing appearance of Kuṭṭiccāttan as an innocent boy got embossed into the minds of children after the release of the movie. Similar to the myths, Kuṭṭiccāttan in the movie also helps the children and performs some tricks to make them happy. He helps the children to fight against the angry master. However, the rasa in the movie is that of humour (*hasya*) rather than that of valour (*veera* rasa). Mini comments that because of the

influence of the movie My dear Kuttichathan, the term Chathanswami is now replaced by Kuṭṭiccāttan in central Kerala (2016).

Most of these depictions of Kuṭṭiccāttan are based on the foundations laid by the oral narratives of Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and *mantravada* traditions. However, some narratives are pushed towards the margins when they create a literary character. In *mantravada* tradition, Kuṭṭiccāttan is portrayed as a troublesome character who is used to performing harmful activities, such as burning clothes, putting waste in food, and displacing objects. For the characterisations in movies, sentiments of fury and fear are left behind. In children's literature, he is considered a mischievous character who performs naughty acts to entertain children and protect them. In the case of Kuṭṭiccāttan Tiṟa, it was *veera rasa* that was prominent. However, in the movie, *veera rasa* is secondary, and *hasya* has a more prominent status. Kuṭṭiccāttan is depicted as a child, and his actions are considered the acts of a child. Even though the same act of protesting against the master is depicted in the myths of Kuṭṭiccāttan Tiṟa and in the plot of the movie, it is considered a naughty act of a kid in the movie. He does these acts out of love for the children, but in the Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ it becomes an act of resistance after facing social injustices. This enhances the heroic nature of Kuṭṭiccāttan in a Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ performance. In the movie, it is portrayed in a positive light, so it becomes a prototype for the character of Kuṭṭiccāttan among a wider audience. Unlike the character of Mayavi, who is portrayed as a good cāttan and Luttappi, who is portrayed as a bad cāttan, though in Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ we cannot classify the character as good or bad.

Kuṭṭiccāttan vellat represents the childhood stage of the Kuṭṭiccāttan; he is very friendly with children, and *hasya rasa* is evoked. He catches children playing with them and doing all mischievous acts. He becomes a "dear" figure to the children. However, in Kuṭṭiccāttan Tiṟa, it is more serious. Similar to the Kuṭṭiccāttan who had drunk the blood of the bull, Kuṭṭiccāttan Tiṟa enacts this by drinking the blood of the cock after the sacrifice. There is a transformation that happens from the naughty and mischievous kid to that brave fighter who stood against social injustices that prevailed in our society. When we closely examine the myths, it exposes a character who wishes for an egalitarian society. His fights were to provide equal rights to all. When he helped Kunkan, Kuṭṭiccāttan was actually enabling him to act according to his wish. When he fights with his father and guru, he is fighting for a world that is equal for all.

In Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ, Kuṭṭiccāttan is shown as a heroic figure who fights for his rights. In Vellatam, Kuṭṭiccāttan is portrayed as a troublesome character in the beginning, but towards the end, he takes the role of a friend or a playmate. He engages with the audience and invites their participation. Through these ritualistic performances, he gets his life back. It has opened up a new space for accepting diversity. A performance that invites the participation of children to adults, from differently abled to marginalised, from boys to girls. It is a space that gave voice and visibility to the people who were sidelined. The performance has erased the boundaries. The performance tries to hold on to the ideas of compassion, love, and togetherness by breaking the shackles and the bonds of caste, class, and gender. It creates a space that is accessible to all. It also opens up the possibility of building and maintaining relationships across religious and geographical boundaries. Kuṭṭiccāttan Vellattam has created a space that brings everyone together. People from various communities gather in the sacred grooves to watch these performances. We could see a new generation that has taken Kuṭṭiccāttan into a new form by incorporating everyone without any boundaries. It is also a place where these differences are merged together to expand spaces of creativity.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Human beings convey and entertain the very same idea through a variety of expressions. But not everything is expressed directly through words or signs. Even when it is expressed through words or signs, not everything is delivered directly. Some are meant to be expressed explicitly, and some implicitly. To meet this expressive need and requirement, different verbal functions such as denotation, indication, suggestion, or a combination of these are used in literary and artistic expressions. Expressions, as a general term, include responses to stimuli, words or utterances in a language, non-linguistic communicative devices, and language-neutral propositions. However, expressions can be categorised into three types: tightly *anchored* non-human expressions, *openly anchored* linguistic expressions and *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions. Aesthetic expressions categorised under *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions" differ from *tightly anchored* non-human expressions and *openly anchored* linguistic expressions. *Openly anchored* linguistic expressions form a slightly permeable yet restricted kind of association between the sign and the signifier. Hence, it is hard-hitting to alter the relationship between the word and its meaning at the literal level due to pre-determined linguistic conventions. However, *openly anchored* linguistic expressions are not rigid as compared to *tightly anchored* expressions. Though bounded metaphorical expressions attempt to break the conventional relationship between word and meaning, it is still associated with their semantic counterpart for some purpose. On the other hand, there is an additional level of flexibility added to *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions. The potential to generate more than one meaning favours the flexibility in *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions. Nevertheless, this suggestive potential to generate more than one meaning is not just limited to words or verbal expressions. It applies to any form of expression that is symbolic in nature. Paintings, performances, oral narratives, be it any form of artistic expression, if it is an *unleashed* aesthetic expression with suggestions, then all the features of *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions will also apply to those expressions.

Art is a ubiquitous element found in all cultures. However, its realisation is not universal. Even while all human beings share the same general cognitive structure that makes art appreciation possible for the species, there are individual variations in art appreciation. Though *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions provide creatively nuanced artistic ways of expressing meaning in a literary work, its apprehension and appreciation get realised only when all circumstances, such as cultural context, intellectual ability, and social interactions that influence the internal temperament, combine in conveying it. Otherwise, it will not be apprehended at all. Similarly, when words with similar phonic elements are not brought out in translation, the target expression shortfalls poetic suggestion (*dhvani*). In translating *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with *śabda-śakti-mūla dhvani*, we encounter linguistic clogging not in terms of primary meaning but due to the linguistic and aesthetic constraints in capturing the suggestive aspects. Nevertheless, when the translation succeeds in capturing the parameters of sound (*śabda*), that is, the structural elements of the source expressions, along with the meaning, reference, and other semantic features, then the lyrical beauty and aesthetic attributes of the expression can be maintained even in the translation of aesthetic expressions with poetic suggestions. But the adaptation of ethnic performances into another form is even more challenging. Ethnic performances like Tiṟayāṭṭaṁ and Sarppaṁtuḷḷal are closely linked to the sacred groves, and taking them away from their pristine environment not just affects the aesthetic beauty of the performance but indirectly affects its natural habitat.

However, repeated encounters with the same form might not create any particular impact on the spectators. Human beings can transform even a point or a line into genuine works of art through improvisations. Even those minimal expressions outstep the perceptible contents of a line or a point. The flexibility of *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions helps to add novelty to any artistic composition. Mythological stories can be reintroduced into an artistic composition without losing their aesthetic appeal with the help of *freely anchored* aesthetic expressions with suggestions. Not just mythological stories, mythical characters, though bound by social and cultural ties, resurrect across various cultures even after centuries through literary works. As Ānandavardhana says, though the path of art is being explored by numerous people of the past, with the suggestive potential of words, the path of art will still be infinite.

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